



Nunthorpe Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	508281
Inspection date	18 May 2006
Inspector	Pauline Pinnegar
Setting Address	The Crescent, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS7 0JW
Telephone number	01642 322580
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Registered person	Nunthorpe Nurseries Group Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School care

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Nunthorpe Early Years Centre has been registered since April 2001. It is one of ten nurseries run by the Nunthorpe Nurseries Group Ltd. The nursery operates from three rooms in a detached converted building in an established residential/commercial area of Middlesbrough. A maximum of 82 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday, from 07.30 to 18.30, all year round. All the children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 88 on roll, aged from three to under eight years. Of these, four children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel into work. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special needs.

The nursery employs 10 members of staff. Of these, there are six who hold appropriate early years qualifications, with two working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children love spending time outdoors and use the outdoor areas with delight. The children go for nature walks in the local community. They play running and chasing games, skilfully avoiding obstacles and use a range of 'Top Start' equipment to develop their physical skills. They practise hitting the balls with the bat, as well as using the balancing and climbing equipment safely and with skill. Staff observe children closely, and plan well to provide opportunities for them to practise and extend their physical skills. Children particularly enjoy the dance sessions which are held weekly, and have developed a very good sense of spatial awareness.

The children are cared for in a warm, clean and well maintained environment. Staff systematically implement well considered health and hygiene routines, so that children stay healthy. They learn good practices within their daily routines, such as they independently reach the tissues to wipe their nose. They learn why it is important to wash their hands after playing with messy activities. Staff consistently reinforce the importance of good hygiene after using the toilet. Children become increasingly independent in attending to their own personal care. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication meet requirements and effectively protect children.

Parent's wishes are fully considered, so that children's individual health and dietary needs are met. Children are encouraged to taste and try different fruits at snack-time and their awareness of the importance of healthy eating is raised well, within everyday conversations and activity planning. There is always fruit available for children in the out of school care provision and healthy snacks, such as wraps with various fillings. At the breakfast club, the children choose from a range of cereals. Snack-times for older children are relaxed and sociable occasions; children are able to make choices and express their preferences. They are offered drinks frequently, especially during the warm weather, and can access drinks independently.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, the children are cared for in a safe and secure indoor environment; the premises are protected with key pad entry systems. All fencing and gates are securely bolted and well maintained to ensure children's outdoor safety. However,

risk assessments do not identify all hazards, such as tools left on the shed in the garden and the tidy up tags being accessible to children using an unsteady chair; these aspects compromise children's safety. The procedure for signing in visitors is effectively monitored to make sure children are not at risk from unauthorised adults.

The environment is made welcoming to children and families because it is brightly decorated with attractively presented displays, which make a good visual impact. Resources are maintained to a good standard, and are well presented at a low level or on the floor, which ensures children can easily access them, as well as developing their growing independence. All equipment is entirely appropriate for the different age groups and staff state that it is regularly checked and cleaned; particular attention is given to the toilet areas.

Children take some responsibility for their environment. They contribute to keeping areas free from hazards. They pick toys up from the floor and help to tidy them away. Children become aware of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they practise the fire safety drill and learn about safety on the roads through role play situations and outings within the local community. The cushioned flooring around the climbing area helps to protect children as they jump and land. Children's safety is prioritised, and staff are vigilant in ensuring that children are carefully supervised and safe at all times. The safe collection and hand over of children to parents and carers at the end of each session is closely monitored.

The children are further protected, as key staff clearly understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the provision. They know the routines for the session and follow the clear boundaries set by staff. The children's behaviour is good. After school, children are able to relax or be active as they choose. The resources and ideas provided for older children motivate and interest them and their ideas contribute to planning. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of how children learn and provide a wide range of interesting activities both in and out of doors for the full age range. The children engage in a good balance of adult-led and self-chosen activities. They relate very well to each other and develop good social skills, such as sitting together and chatting at meal times.

The children achieve well, with staff giving them very good support, clear explanations and plan activities which are appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. The children have established a friendly rapport with staff who interact effectively. They ask questions, are interested in what children are doing and listen to their ideas. Learning is made enjoyable for children, as staff are friendly and give very enthusiastic responses to their achievements. Children's efforts are valued and they receive praise and encouragement for example, such as showing what they have made with the play dough.

At the out of school club, some children spend their time sociably chatting and enjoy

talking about what they have done at school. Staff take account of what children enjoy, so that the activities that are available reflect and engage their interest. For example, children have explored interesting topics, such as re-cycling and road safety. They have also enjoyed visits to the local fire station. Older children enjoy drawing, painting and creative play and making complex models with construction equipment. In the pre-school, the children communicate confidently to share their experiences and staff actively reinforce 'good sitting and listening'. They enjoy a wide range of books, listen with pleasure to stories and write for real purposes in their role play. They select their own name card as they arrive, and are beginning to link sounds and letters. They enjoy many activities, encouraging them to count and become familiar with number concepts within their everyday routines. For example, when playing outdoors with the small water tray they act out number rhymes whilst singing 'five little ducks'. They investigate and use mathematical ideas and language as they roll and shape dough, build tall structures, make dens with the large bricks and fill and empty containers in the sand and water.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good, so that children make consistent progress towards the early learning goals. They are confident to try out new experiences, supported by the staff who have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage of learning. Children enjoy a wide variety of experiences within the daily environment; they are interested and motivated to learn. Activity planning is well structured and successfully promotes opportunities in all areas of learning. Staff use their knowledge of children's individual interests very well to extend their learning.

Children can access many resources without assistance and ask staff if others are needed. However, the organisation of the book corner, maths area and the IT equipment is not organised creatively to ensure children access these areas frequently to support their learning. Also on occasion large group activities do not fully engage children and sustain their interest. All staff are clear about the purpose of planned activities and give very good support to children, including those with special educational needs, interacting as necessary to help build on what children know and can do. Staff reinforce the purpose of the activity so that children are very clear about what they will be doing.

The children are very confident communicators, and happily share their own ideas and experiences; they use language well to describe, recall and explain. Children love stories; they listen attentively and contribute enthusiastically. Older children recognise and practice writing their name; they begin to link sounds and letters as they explore 'Jolly phonics' and the letter of the week. They practice writing and make very good use of the well-equipped mark-making area. Children count and use numbers in everyday activities, using comparative size and positional language with comprehension as they sort and make patterns. The children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly good. Children show developing independence in matters of dress and hygiene. Staff support children as they dress themselves ready for outdoor activity, whilst sensitively encouraging independence and take control of their own behaviour.

Children are very interested in the world around them. They learn about the seasons

and the weather and search for creatures in the garden. They explore and investigate the 'interest boxes' looking at creatures, such as ants, ladybirds and natural materials, as well as twigs and pine cones. The current topic is growth and new life, with the children growing seeds and sweet peas. They make their own models and have free opportunity for spontaneous expression of their own creativity, such as developing imaginary games in the home corner. They learn about the wider world as they explore their local community, enjoying trips to the flower shop, local park and the nature walks. They also have travelled by train to Middlesbrough when learning about transport. There are regular visitors to the nursery, such as the pet shop owner, when the children had a chance to look at living creatures, such as mice and snakes.

The children are able to design and construct in three dimension, using a range of equipment. They explore media, such as paint, paper, sand and water. Children make artefacts which link in with topic work, as well as those which build on their own ideas. Routines and naturally occurring opportunities are generally utilised well to encourage children's practise of mathematical language. Children enjoy singing and moving to music and particularly enjoy the dance sessions were they demonstrate very good spatial awareness.

Key staff have a good grasp of where children are at, in relation to the stepping stones. They effectively observe, record and use information to inform plans and move children on. These staff members give good support to other staff, who are developing their skills in delivering the Foundation Stage, observation techniques and recording children's achievement.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children's confidence and self-esteem is nurtured well, as staff make learning interesting, fun and involve children effectively. Children's contributions are valued, and they receive regular praise and encouragement because staff have children's best interests at heart. The children feel at ease and part of the group because staff are very good at helping children feel good about themselves. They have opportunities to talk about themselves, their own experiences and feelings.

Children behave appropriately because staff set clear boundaries and reinforce positive behaviour. Children play together harmoniously and are able to work out their differences because of the staff's calm and sensitive approach. This consistency from staff helps to develop children's self-esteem and respect for each other. Routines follow children's needs. They have time to relax as well as be active and are given sufficient time to complete activities. Children are able to make decisions and choices because their contributions are valued by staff. As a result, the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. Children are able to make choices during activities, with daily routines and are given responsibilities, such as tidying toys away at the end of the session.

The children wear the 'tidy up tags' with pride. Older children are encouraged to help prepare the food for snack at tea time. Children behave well and respond positively

to adult requests, including when asked to fetch something. All children are included and participate fully because activities are thoughtfully planned to meet individual needs. Children with special needs receive very good support because staff are aware of their requirements, set appropriate and manageable activities and help them to keep on task. Children value diversity because staff are good at helping them to celebrate aspects of other cultures and religions, including Divali and Chinese New Year. Parents are kept well informed about their child and what is happening within the provision, as information is regularly shared with parents formally and informally.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They are made to feel welcome and can take part in sessions if they choose. A good rapport has been developed with parents and carers. They receive detailed information about the Foundation Stage, through written information and individual meetings where they can discuss their child's progress and individual record of achievement. They are able to contribute to children's learning because newsletters give suggestions on how they can contribute to topic work. Parents report positively about staff, their approachability, the progress their children have made since attending and the quality of the activities provided.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Both nursery and out of school environments are organised generally well to ensure children's welfare and safety. All required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed. Parent's wishes regarding their child's care clearly influence the day-to-day practice and clear written agreements are recorded. Daily routines are clearly planned and flexibly implemented; however, the organisation of lunchtime sessions for children does not always support their needs fully. In the out of school provision, there is not sufficient resources for children to relax quietly after a busy day at school.

Staff ratios are good and they are deployed effectively to respond to children's varying needs and interests. Within the current management structure, the manager has responsibility for two nurseries within close distance. However, a suitable person has been identified as the person in charge when she is not on site. Staff work together as a cohesive team, supported by effective liaison with senior management. Children benefit from the clear sense of purpose and commitment by the staff to enhance the already good practice within the nursery. For example, staff demonstrate an enthusiasm to increase their knowledge and are actively supported and encouraged by management to attend regular, local training. This is successfully supplemented with plenty of relevant in-service training provided by the nursery owners.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. Staff are actively encouraged to attend training and develop personally, which has a positive impact on how they care for children. Appraisals take place regularly, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, as well as ensuring that the staff access training which is appropriate to their own needs. The owners and senior management have a successful working relationship and are very supportive to staff. They are equally committed and clearly

strive to achieve the best possible standards for the children. All staff contribute to curriculum planning and complete detailed assessments of children's progress. which informs future planning for all children. Regular staff meetings ensure that the educational programme is continually monitored and evaluated with agreed areas for development used to form action plans.

Overall, the nursery provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom care is provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider, in relation to the care of children, was asked to; ensure the playgroup records the arrival and departure times of the children; ensure drinking water is available at all times; ensure all children's individual needs are met; develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, to ensure consistency throughout the day; ensure Ofsted is informed of all significant events; ensure staff promote good hygiene practices, particularly at mealtimes; review the operational plan to ensure the effective deployment of staff and the smooth running of the nursery day. All records within the nursery are now clear and accurate, ensuring that the children's safety and welfare, as well as ensuring that Ofsted is informed of all significant events.

Children's health needs are met as they have access to fresh drinking water at all times. All children's individual needs are met and their welfare promoted as the operational plan now deploys staff effectively. Meal times have improved; however, this is an area for further development to ensure children are well supported as they have lunch. Behaviour is now managed consistently within the nursery. Staff set clear boundaries for children, resulting in children behaving well.

In relation to the nursery education of children, the provider was asked to; use the assessment system to inform future planning for individual children, so that they receive sufficient challenge in an all areas of learning; give more attention to the detail of planning for the physical development programme; ensure children receive regular opportunities to build on existing skills and develop new ones; ensure staff are confident about their roles and responsibilities and work together as a team.

Staff now work very well together as a team, and are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities with a clear key worker system in place. Both planning and assessments are clear and up to date. Detailed assessments fully inform planning for all the children, ensuring that appropriate challenges are set for all the children. Planning covers, physical development in detail and children have lots of opportunities to develop, both the small and gross motor skills.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- ensure there is appropriate provision for children to rest and relax comfortably
- ensure all resources are safely accessible to children and the outdoor play area is free from all risk of hazards
- continue to monitor use of staff time during the lunch time period to ensure children are fully supported

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

- develop use of the maths and IT areas to support children's learning and organise the book area to make this more inviting
- monitor the length of time for large group activities to ensure children are fully engaged.

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