



Thurton & Ashby St. Mary Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	257946
Inspection date	07 September 2006
Inspector	Jane Louise Tallent
Setting Address	Thurton Pre-School, Thurton Village Hall, Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 6AX
Telephone number	01508 480 545 (chair)
E-mail	
Registered person	Thurton & Ashby St. Mary Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Thurton and Ashby St Mary Pre-school opened in 1992. It operates from Thurton Village Hall, where children have access to a main play hall, quiet room, toilets, cloakroom, kitchen and an enclosed outdoor area. The pre-school serves the local area and neighbouring villages in rural Norfolk.

The group are registered to care for 24 children from two to under five years. There are currently 16 children from two to five years on roll. This includes nine funded three-year-olds. The setting does not currently support any funded children who speak English as an additional language. They are supportive of children with special educational needs.

The group opens on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays during term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30.

Three staff work with the children. They are supported by a fourth member of staff who provides additional cover, as required. Two staff have level three qualifications in child care and two have a level two qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning how to lead healthy lifestyles. They play in an environment that is maintained to a good level with clean play surfaces, toys and equipment. Staff regularly monitor the cleanliness of the fridge and toilets and children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating snacks. In this way they have started to take responsibility for their own personal care and are suitably safeguarded against unnecessary spread of infection.

Children help to prepare their mid-morning snacks together with staff. A good selection of fresh fruit is provided to encourage the children to try new tastes and consequently they are able to name fruits and choose which foods they like best for the following week. Children have free access to water to quench their thirst, while they play indoors and outside, which means that they do not become unnecessarily thirsty. Children know that they can ask for a drink if staff forget to put the water out for them. The children's dietary needs are routinely recorded on children's records to make sure that parents' preferences are respected.

Children have access to an outdoor play area and are considerate of other children when they run, dig in the garden, ride their bikes and play ball games. Overall, the children's health is well promoted through these activities and as they take on imaginary roles in the play house. There is a suitable policy for dealing with sickness and a suitable system is in place for gaining parents' signatures when medicines are given or accidents have been recorded. If children feel unwell, or have minor accidents, all members of staff confidently deal with their minor cuts and bumps because they attend appropriate first aid courses to keep their knowledge up-to-date. The staff make sure that the first aid box is always well stocked and is easily accessible in case it is needed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, the children are able to play safely, although sometimes insufficient attention is paid to making sure that children are not exposed to hazards when they are in the kitchen. The areas used by the children are well lit and warm. There is a suitable system in place for staff to monitor external doors and record who is visiting the premises while sessions are running. This enables children to gain confidence as they settle and make friends.

The children are adequately supervised. They have access to plenty of good quality resources and can easily reach additional equipment in case they want to use different materials for their pictures. Children help to tidy toys away in order to play safely, although not all children understand how to sit safely while they use scissors which exposes them to an unnecessary

hazard. There is sufficient space for the children to play in and all of the children behave well. The children are able to play independently or co-operatively together.

Children notify staff when they want to use the toilets and are beginning to respect the rules that are in place to reduce their exposure to hazards. The children start sessions by finding their name as part of a self-registration system which records that they have arrived. They are also signed in during daily registration exercises so that everyone's safety is assured in emergency situations. The children and staff regularly take part in evacuation drills to familiarise themselves with the procedure so that their safety is prioritised in case of an emergency.

All of the staff have attended training and understand how to make a referral in order to safeguard children from abuse. The staff understand the need to maintain confidentiality when protecting children and are able to work together with other agencies if they need to do so.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are building trust into their relationships with the staff at the beginning of a new scholastic year and are encouraged by children who have been attending for longer. They make friends with other children and co-operate with each other by sharing materials and taking turns.

Children choose how to spend much of their time, which effectively helps them to pursue their own interests and develop skills. Staff allow children to plan one carpet activity and what to eat for snacks. These choices are well recorded which helps children to realise that their opinions are valued. Staff are supportive of new arrivals which helps them to feel that they belong. This enables them to settle quickly. Children are helped to make progress by staff who use their understanding of child development, 'Birth to three matters' and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to prepare challenges for them.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. As a direct consequence of this, the children are enjoying the experiences on offer and are learning. All staff are qualified, and have experience within this group. They are well organised and perceptive to children's interests. During self-initiated play the staff use questions successfully to support children's thinking and language skills. For example, children are introduced to an imaginary office where they 'talk on the phone'. At circle time the children try to guess what a mystery object is. Staff use these activities to skilfully discuss colours and use mathematical language so that children identify shapes and count spontaneously. Children demonstrate how easily they are able to count to nine together in a group. The staff use established systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and these are accessible for planning experiences that help children to take the next steps in their learning.

Staff welcome children as they arrive and encourage the children to attempt to read straight away by finding their name cards and matching them with the label on their peg. This activity is worthwhile as a form of self-registration but does not change to challenge individual children

as they make progress. The children talk to staff and their friends and in this way they develop a sense of belonging within the group. They listen well to stories. The stories are well read by staff who use clear diction to capture the children's interest. Some children form recognisable shapes and letters as they mark paper during imaginary play in their office, for example. They use mathematical language to describe shoes, make pairs and compare the size of their feet. Children handle materials with ease and are able to hold pencils, paint brushes and glue sticks sufficiently well to carry out tasks. They have frequent opportunities to practise their hand and eye co-ordination when pedalling and throwing balls outside. Overall, the children are easily engaged in activities because they have learned how to play together harmoniously. This enables them to spend significant periods of time completing activities and improving their skills.

Staff use their knowledge and experience of the Foundation Stage well to help children to extend their games and are quick to provide them with additional resources. Children are introduced to the written word and numbers through clear labelling and well planned activities. Staff help children to use initiative as they play and consequently they engage readily in imaginary situations, such as doing the shopping and preparing meals. Some children take on different roles as they dress up in pretty dresses and become office workers. A regular writing table, ink stamps, templates, pencils, office equipment and free painting activities promote mark making and consequently the children attempt to make marks each day and develop their early writing skills. They are occasionally able to plant and water seeds in the garden outside which teaches them responsibility. The children enjoy taking part in music making and move spontaneously to music with ribbons. They use dough, ice, water and a variety of other textures to promote their sensory development. All children are inspired to take part in physical activities here because there is a wide range of stimulating, age-appropriate resources available to them which promote their physical development while they are indoors and outside. For example, they can throw, climb, balance and pedal which encourages them to think about space and what happens to their bodies when they exercise. The children's personal, social and emotional skills are equally well prioritised by staff and as a consequence the children are gaining confidence as they learn how to become independent thinkers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children have suitable opportunities to learn about others in the world around them through themes and as they play with plenty of good quality, non-stereotypical resources. They learn about roles, cultures and festivals through planned activities such as the celebration of Diwali, Chinese New Year and Christmas. Children with disabilities are embraced by the group although they have little practical experience of caring for this group of children to date. The staff are aware of the support available to them and understand the need to work in co-operation with parents. Good use is made of the enclosed outside area which adds a further choice to the physical challenges that the children are able to experience. The children show good levels of co-operation with each other and sensitivity for their environment as they plant seeds and care for them as they grow in the outdoor garden.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The children gain confidence and a sense of belonging in this environment where they are welcomed warmly.

They are confident to join in because staff are interested in them as individuals and are respectful towards them. The children's behaviour is good. Staff have realistic expectations for the children to aspire to. Consequently the children are beginning to negotiate with others and take some responsibility for their own behaviour. This sort of mutual co-operation is built on by staff.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. This contributes significantly to children's well-being in the group. Staff seek parents' views about their child's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting, in their learning stories, and on an informal basis throughout their time there. Children's parents come into the playroom each session and have good opportunities to talk to the staff who are on duty. Equally, parents are able to see their child's learning story and have access to information about the Foundation Stage early learning goals. The children's self-esteem is boosted by their parents' show of interest. Staff ensure that all parents know how their child is progressing and developing. Children proudly show their parents what they can do. This sort of involvement ensures that parents know that they can contribute to their child's good health, safety, development and learning. There is not however a complaints register in place that can easily be shared with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Children are able to enjoy a wide range of good quality activities designed to help them to learn, because the staff and their management committee, are well organised and have good knowledge of child development, 'Birth to three matters' and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Children succeed and make progress because staff implement an effective system for monitoring their achievements, and identifying what the children need to do next, before drawing up weekly curriculum plans. In this way individual children's needs are not overlooked and staff, parents and committee members can effectively monitor the quality of their teaching and the children's learning.

Children benefit from the work that staff undertake to promote their well-being, and the support that the staff receive from their management committee even though some recently elected officers are still familiarising themselves with the new responsibilities that they have taken on as committee members. Staff frequently attend training courses to update their own knowledge, and the management committee regularly review their policy documents to make sure that they reflect practice within the group. Children mostly benefit from consistent care because the policies and procedures are an effective part of the induction process and give valuable insight into the group's aims and objectives for the children.

Staff are aware of their current strengths and weaknesses, because the group have produced a written self-evaluation document which they are able to refer to and use to monitor and evaluate aspects of their practice as it evolves.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to support children in managing their behaviour at snack times. As a consequence snack times have been restructured and children are able to have good input in the selection and preparation of food and drink.

They were also asked to understand what children are expected to get out of the activities. Since then two more staff have gained appropriate qualifications which allows them to make meaningful contributions in planning activities and deciding what the children should aim to achieve.

Hand washing was another area for improvement and children are now able to assume some responsibility for their own personal hygiene through routines that are in place.

Finally, children's behaviour management was an issue. Since the last inspection the staff have attended a cluster meeting with their link teacher where behaviour management was explored. Additionally two staff have gained further understanding of child development and behaviour management through their childcare courses.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 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):

- make sure that children are taught how to use scissors safely and that risk assessments are rigorous enough to enable children to move around safely while they are in the kitchen
- keep a record of complaints relating to the National Standards and any action taken

- monitor and develop the children's behaviour policy to ensure that adults consistently manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

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 the self-registration system to provide challenges for more able children.

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