



Thorpe End Teddies

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254317
Inspection date	16 November 2006
Inspector	Rosalie Mary Turner
Setting Address	St David's Drive, Plumstead Road, Thorpe End, Norwich, Norfolk, NR13 5HR
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Thorpe End Teddies
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?

Thorpe End Teddies is a playgroup run by a voluntary committee of parents and carers. It opened in 1993 and operates from rooms in a church hall on the outskirts of the city of Norwich, Norfolk. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 09.30 to 12.00 during school term times. Children have access to a small enclosed courtyard for outside play.

There are currently 22 children on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children who attend come mainly from the local community and surrounding areas.

The playgroup employs five staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning the importance of personal hygiene because the staff talk to them about why it is important to keep their hands clean. They independently access the hand basins or help themselves to wipes before eating or drinking and after they use the toilet. Children's health is appropriately safeguarded through the robust use of anti-bacterial spray and staff ensure that snacks are prepared and served in line with food hygiene requirements. Children are well protected from the spread of infection because the pre-school does not provide care if they are suffering from a contagious illness. There are robust systems in place to ensure that medicines are suitably administered but the date and time of accidents are not always recorded. Consequently, children's well-being could be compromised because their parents do not have full details of the circumstances surrounding injuries they have received within the pre-school.

Fresh drinking water is always available and children are reminded to help themselves as a way to maintain their health. Their growth and development is assured because the pre-school works to a pleasing healthy eating policy. For example, children are offered a variety of fresh fruits or vegetables, such as apple, banana, kiwi fruit and cucumber, for their snacks and they quickly learn which foods they should eat to help them to stay healthy. They thrive because staff obtain full details of any allergies before they provide care and go to great lengths to ensure that children eat foods that are appropriate to their health.

Children are developing a positive attitude to healthy living through the valuable range of physical activities provided indoors and outside. They look forward to playing in the fresh air particularly in the summer months when routine activities, including sand and water play, are provided in the courtyard. Staff have recently introduced a wide variety of stimulating resources, for example, skittles, bats, balls and a hopscotch mat to ensure children understand how exercise helps them to take care of their bodies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children happily separate from their carers because they are warmly welcomed into an attractive and safe environment. The staff work hard to transform the church hall into a child-centred room by displaying their work, using screens to break up the large area and playing background music. Newcomers settle very quickly because the staff ask an older more confident child to become 'a special friend' and show them what happens in pre-school. Furthermore, new children are asked to arrive when the others are engrossed in play so that their key workers can spend time helping them to feel at home. Consequently, all children are emotionally secure.

Children stay relaxed because they are able to independently access a stimulating range of good quality toys that are safe and complete. The staff show them how to use the resources safely and encourage children to use their 'busy fingers' to help them to tidy up. Consequently, they reduce the risk of others tripping on toys that are left on the floor. Children are able to play freely as the staff complete a thorough daily check of the premises to identify and minimise

possible hazards. They are particularly well protected from 'stranger danger' because the staff are vigilant to secure internal doors when other areas of the church are in use. Adults are particularly aware of outside dangers and have devised a secret code to alert each other to possible threats so that they can safeguard the children without frightening them.

Children are protected from risk of possible abuse because the staff supervise them closely at all times. They demonstrate that they can recognise and respond to the signs and symptoms of children at risk, and staff are able to refer to local guidance that is kept in the pre-school. A clear child protection policy further ensures that adults are able to act quickly if they have concerns to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy and relationships throughout the pre-school are superb. Firm friendships have developed in a remarkably short period of time because the staff show a genuine love of working with children and are consistently kind and attentive in their approach to them. The high adult to child ratios ensures all children are well supported but the younger children relish the close personal attention they are able to receive. Therefore, they come in eagerly and show self-assurance from a very early age.

The staff make impressive use of 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and provide a stimulating programme of activities. Children are helped to build on their existing skills because the staff have very realistic expectations of their abilities. The highly effective key worker system ensures that adults have an in depth knowledge of children's individual and developmental needs, therefore, they provide interesting activities that help them to make progress. For example, children are enthralled by the patterns that they discover as they use leaves to print. They concentrate remarkably well and persist with the difficult task of covering the leaf with paint, demonstrating excellent hand to eye co-ordination. Children delight in the feel of the sand as they make patterns and staff seize opportunities to challenge them to 'see if you can choose a circle!' All children have commendable choices and make an active contribution to every session. They freely initiate play and choose resources from the low-level 'busy trolley' and as a result, remain fully engaged in meaningful play.

Children have an excellent attitude to learning because the staff constantly chat to them, making commendable use of praise and encouragement to ensure they are motivated. Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings or share their experiences through 'Barnaby Bear' who takes turns to go home with each child. As a result, they show exceptional care and consideration for each other and quickly offer comfort if anyone feels upset.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make very rapid progress towards the early learning goals because the staff have a strong knowledge of the Foundation Stage and they take time to get to know each child extremely well. They use their comprehensive understanding of how children learn to provide a programme of rich and varied activities that are competently matched to their individual needs and interests. The planning cycle is superb.

Staff rigorously monitor children as they play and use their findings to produce highly effective plans that clearly identify the next steps in learning for each child. Consequently, children achieve exceedingly well as the experiences offered support them to do things that go just beyond their capabilities.

Children make full use of the indoor and outside play space to gain control of their bodies. They demonstrate excellent spatial awareness as they move around the small enclosed courtyard, they enjoy throwing balls at skittles and willingly take turns as they play hopscotch. Children respond to questions confidently and they wait for adults to finish speaking before they answer. They enjoy books and often self-select from the excellent range of fiction and reference books to 'read' stories to each other. All children use mark making materials within their routine play and are developing commendable pencil control. They have superb opportunities to recognise their own names as staff frequently change the colour of their name card to aid recognition of print rather than colour.

Children's mathematical development is exceptionally well promoted through the impressive range of resources they are able to access to help them to calculate. For instance, the wooden boats encourage children to recognise numerals and staff extend their learning by asking 'Do we need more or less people to fill our boat?' Children measure and compare within routine activities and skilfully describe the towers of magnetic blocks that they build as 'taller or shorter'. They are fascinated by the science box that contains many items to tempt them to question how things work, including magnifying glasses, lenses that change the shape of viewed objects and items that require batteries. Children have an excellent awareness of the wider world because they are introduced to festivals from around the world within focussed activities. They are also developing an understanding of their own community through frequent visits to the pre-school by the local police and fire services, the road safety officer, reception class teacher and dental hygienist.

Children thoroughly enjoy being creative and have outstanding opportunities to be responsible for their work from beginning to end. They enthusiastically use paint and drawing materials and are given a sense of pride in their work because it is displayed to decorate the hall. Children's imagination is exceptionally well fostered through the varied and exciting use of the role play area to encourage them to express their ideas and feelings. For example, they relish using the genuine resources, such as the green gown and plastic syringes, that have been specially provided for their vet's surgery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel at home in the pre-school because the staff have a positive approach and welcome families from all backgrounds. They help children to feel good about themselves by getting down to their level when they are speaking and using their names to show that they are interested in what they say and do. Children's individual needs are robustly and sensitively met. For instance, staff have comforted those who have lost a pet by allowing them to keep 'Barnaby Bear' and providing a new teddy to go home with other children.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They make friends easily and have many opportunities to learn about the faiths and beliefs of others through the vibrant posters and positive images in the wide range of books. Children behave extremely well because the staff set clear age-appropriate boundaries that are consistently applied. They recognise that children sometimes become angry and quietly explain why their actions are inappropriate so that they learn right from wrong. Children are guided by the calm and polite examples set by all of the staff who thank children for helping them and use praise to reward good behaviour.

Children of all abilities are helped to reach their full potential because the staff are quick to recognise any developmental delay. There are robust procedures in place to guide them if children appear not to be making progress and the special needs co-ordinator works closely with parents and other agencies to develop individual care plans to help children of all abilities make progress.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. A comprehensive prospectus and welcome pack clearly explains the six areas of learning and the wall displays provide further information to help parents to understand how their children learn. However, there is no system in place to consult with parents and carers to discover what their children can do at the beginning of the Foundation Stage. Therefore, staff cannot always ensure that planning meets children's learning needs at the outset of the educational programme. Parents and carers exchange information with staff when they help on rota or as they deliver and collect their children. They are also invited to an open morning where they can formally look at individual learning stories with their child's key worker. Consequently, all parents say they know the progress that their children are making and speak extremely positively about the pre-school. For example, they feel 'the staff are very approachable' and say their children 'love it here!'. They specifically like 'the care that my child receives' and state that 'the structure gives children confidence'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by staff who understand how they develop and are committed to ongoing training. For example, all staff are proactive to access short courses to ensure that their knowledge and skills are up to date and some are currently working towards a recognised childcare qualification. The staff teams work very well together, they communicate effectively and are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Children have opportunities to extend their learning because the premises and resources are well organised. They can move about freely and make choices from the pleasing selection of activities set out on low tables or on the floor. Children have time to be active, to concentrate or take part in quieter activities and the well established daily routine provides plenty of variety to hold their interest. The welfare, care and learning of older children is exceptionally well met. For example, numbers attending the 'Rising Fives' session are limited so that staff can work more closely with each child to prepare them for school.

All legally required documentation is very well maintained and the robust attendance records ensure that all are kept safe in an emergency. Therefore, children's welfare is safeguarded. The

policies and procedures are specific to the setting, consistently applied by the staff and provide comprehensive guidance to help them to provide good quality care for children.

The leadership and management is good. The organising committee have thorough recruitment procedures in place to employ skilled staff and ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff and committee are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-school and are committed to continuing to improve the care and education for all children. The supervisor gives commendable support and guidance to newly appointed staff to enable them to deliver and monitor the educational programme. She regularly reviews and evaluates the provision to ensure that children's welfare and learning is effectively supported. The pre-school is guided by clear aims and objectives that enable staff to provide a stimulating learning environment as evidenced by the outstanding progress that children are making towards the early learning goals.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school was recommended to develop an operational plan, to conduct a risk assessment of the premises and to make a special needs statement available to parents. They were also asked to develop staff's knowledge of equal opportunities and child protection issues.

All administrative forms and policies, including a clear special needs statement and staffing procedures that identify how they will be deployed, have been developed and form the operational plan. It is available to staff and parents and is updated as soon as details change to help the pre-school to operate effectively and meet children's needs. A comprehensive risk assessment also forms part of the operational plan and staff continue to carry out a daily check of the premises to identify and minimise possible hazards. Therefore, children are safeguarded. Staff have provided a range of resources, including books, dolls, puzzles and figures depicting disability, to encourage children to respect diversity. They have trained in child protection issues and all staff have a direct line of consultation if they are worried about a child. As a result, adults can act as soon as they are concerned to protect children from possible harm.

At the last inspection of early years education the centre agreed to develop planning to ensure that the learning objectives of the activities are being achieved, to extend the use of assessments and to increase opportunities for children to explore music and textures.

Staff have worked with a support teacher from the Local Authority to develop planning and their assessment of children's abilities. Each child's learning story clearly shows the progress they are making and includes the staff's robust assessments of their next steps of learning. Staff are competently using their findings to plan challenges to ensure that the more and less able children make the best possible progress towards the early learning goals. As a result, children's rate of progress in all areas of their learning has significantly improved. Children enjoy using musical instruments to explore rhythms and listen to soothing background music to help them to settle. They use many different natural materials, such as wet or dry sand, peat,

corn flour and leaves or experiment with a range of tactile collage materials, including shiny foil, glitter, cotton wool and tissue to ensure their sensory development is well promoted.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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

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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):

- improve record keeping by ensuring that the date and time of each accident are always recorded.

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):

- further develop formal opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's learning, with particular reference to consulting them about starting points towards the early learning goals.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk