



Northend Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY317489
Inspection date	12 December 2006
Inspector	Christine Lynne Hodge
Setting Address	Lincoln Close, Erith, Kent, DA8 2EB
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Pre-School Learning Alliance
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Northend Children's Centre is a full day care provision run by the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The Children's Centre is based on the ground floor of purpose built premises which is shared with Sure Start, who operate from the first floor. The Children's Centre is situated in Slade Green, within the London borough of Bexley. Children are grouped according to their age range. There are three base rooms. These include a baby unit for children under two years. This incorporates a play room, two sleep rooms, a milk preparation kitchen and a baby changing area. There are two further play rooms, with adjoining bathroom facilities, for children aged two to three years and three to five years. Each play room has its own fully enclosed, outside play area with a safety surface. There are also kitchen facilities, a training room and staff facilities.

The setting is open weekdays from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round except bank holidays. Both full day care and sessional places are available. There are currently 40 children on roll of whom 11 are receiving funding for nursery education. The nursery welcomes and supports children who have special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. The nursery employs a team of 14 staff who hold an appropriate early years qualification or who are working towards gaining a qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted throughout the setting. Efficient cleaning routines ensure that the premises are kept free from dirt and germs. Comprehensive policies on health and hygiene ensure that children are protected from the spread of infection. For example, children with sickness and diarrhoea or infectious diseases are required to stay at home. Effective nappy changing procedures include the use of disposable gloves and aprons, and the changing mat is cleaned with a weak solution of Milton after each nappy change. Bed linen is stored in individual boxes which are labelled with each child's name. Children are learning good personal hygiene by washing their hands before and after mealtimes and by staff explaining to older children the importance of doing so. Children have good opportunities to play outside daily in the fresh air and take part in a wide range of physical activities which include running, jumping, balancing, climbing and riding on bikes which promote their large motor skills. Babies have lots of clear floor space where they can crawl and walk, with stable furniture where they can pull themselves up on. Medication and accident records are well maintained. All staff hold a first aid qualification and there is a fully stocked first aid box in each of the group rooms. As a result children can be cared for appropriately in the event of accidents.

Children benefit from healthy meals and snacks which include fresh fruit, vegetables and pasta dishes. Staff talk to children about the importance of healthy eating. Children's special dietary requirements are catered for and are well recorded. However, the setting does not employ a cook and meals are prepared by nursery staff who hold a food hygiene certificate and who take turns to work in the kitchen. Consequently the range of meals provided are limited according to staff's cooking ability.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming, child friendly environment. The play space and play resources in each group room are well organised to allow children to move around safely and independently and to allow them to access different types of activities. Furniture, equipment and play resources are in good condition and meet the needs of the children attending. The nursery is secure and staff closely monitor all arrivals and departures. Visitors are required to ring the bell and sign the visitors record book. There are good systems in place to ensure that children only leave the nursery with an approved adult. Regular risk assessments

of the premises and regular emergency evacuation drills are carried out effectively to ensure children's safety.

Good levels of supervision ensure that children play safely. Children are learning about keeping themselves safe as staff talk to them to gain an awareness of their own safety with the use of simple rules and reminders. For example, in the Pre-School room children are reminded not to swing on their chairs and not to run indoors as they will hurt themselves.

Children are well safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into place when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and very settled throughout the nursery setting. They enjoy their time spent at the nursery because staff in each group room provide children with a wide range of well planned indoor and outdoor activities which help to promote their learning and development. There is a good balance of child led and adult led activities. The well equipped garden area which is partially covered and has a safety surface means that children have daily access to outdoor play all year round. The Birth to three matters framework is used to plan activities for children under three years and the Foundation Stage is used to plan for children three to five. Children are sociable and enjoy good relationships with adults and each other.

The baby room is warm and welcoming with lots of clear floor space where babies and toddlers can move around freely in order to develop their physical skills. Children are being well supported to become competent learners and skilful communicators. Adult interaction is very good. Staff provide younger babies with lots of cuddles especially at feed time and as they become tired. They sit on the floor, play with the children and talk to them about what they are doing to encourage their early communication skills. Children have easy access to a good range of age appropriate resources such as a ball pool, activity centres, construction, books, soft toys and musical toys together with activities such as sand, water, drawing, painting and garden play. Children in the two to three year old room take part in a good balance of indoor and outdoor activities throughout the day. They have independent access to a variety of play resources which include a well equipped role-play area, construction toys, puzzles, water and sand, free painting and outdoor play. Children benefit from good adult interaction.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and that children learn best through play. They work well together to plan a wide range of activities which cover all areas of children's learning and meet the individual needs of all the children in the group. The pre-school room is well organised into different areas of learning. Staff use lots of open ended questions to promote children's language development. Nursery routines such as mealtimes are used effectively to extend children's learning. A good keyworker system together with an effective system for recording observations of children's progress enables staff to plan for children's next steps in learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is progressing well. Children happily separate from parents and enthusiastically engage in activities. They enjoy their daily routines and are confident in making independent choices about activities, drinks and snacks. Children are developing good self help skills. For example, at meal times children enjoy helping to set the table and confidently serve themselves. Children play well on their own and in small groups. They play cooperatively together in the home corner and in the garden. Children with special needs are well supported within the group.

Children are confident speakers and have good listening skills. They confidently talk about real life situations, for example, at snack time a child proudly tells the group about his trip to Asda with his Grandma. Children happily stand up in front of their peers to tell stories they have made up. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories read by staff. They have access to a good range of books in a comfortable well resourced book area. Children have good opportunities to practise early writing skills using a range of resources. They are encouraged to write their own names on their work although name cards are not provided routinely as a writing resource. There are lots of visual displays around the room to show children that text carries meaning.

Children are taking part in a good range of activities which are helping them to learn about shape, size and numbers. Although resources such as number freezes on display in the group room are limited, younger children are beginning to recognise numbers shown to them out of sequence while older children are confident at this activity. Children enjoy counting, sequencing and matching and using computer programmes for number recognition and problem solving. Children's imagination and creativity is well fostered through a wide range of activities such as free painting, corn flour, play dough, shaving foam, junk modelling and various construction resources. Children have great fun playing in the role-play area and with the dressing up clothes. They enjoy singing familiar songs and using the pretend microphone. Children have good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the community and wider world with regular visits to the library. Positive image play resources, together with themed topics about different festivals help children to learn about other cultures. Children talk about the weather and days of the week at group time. They have independent access to the computer which they use with confidence. Children have good spatial awareness and take part in a wide range of daily activities which help to develop their all-round physical skills. They practise their fine motor skills by using a variety of tools and equipment such as the computer mouse and keyboard, pencils, paintbrushes, scissors, puzzles and various construction resources. Children develop their large motor skills by running, jumping, throwing and catching balls, riding on bikes and balancing on beams during outdoor play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Detailed information on children taken from parents on admission ensures that staff can care appropriately for children's individual needs. The centre welcomes children and families from a diverse community and supports children with English as an additional language. Children take part in a wide range of activities that help them to gain an understanding of different cultures and religions and the wider community with regular trips to the library. They celebrate

a range of different festivals throughout the year and have recently celebrated the Festival of Light. Positive image play resources such as books, puzzles, dressing up clothes, dolls and play foods together with posters displayed around the nursery help children to learn to respect other cultures. The nursery's experienced Special Needs Coordinator provides very good support to children with identified learning difficulties, disabilities and behaviour problems. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children respond very well to positive reinforcement and positive behaviour management strategies applied by staff who act as good role models. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement and are supported well by adults to play nicely together, to share and take turns. As a result children are happy, confident and overall are well behaved. Staff work with outside agencies to support children with identified behaviour problems.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. This contributes to children's well-being and development and is supported by comments made to the inspector during the inspection. New parents are provided with a comprehensive information pack detailing all aspects of nursery life. Effective settling in procedures ensure that children are ready to separate from parents. Display boards throughout the nursery ensure that parents are well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three matters framework. There are excellent systems in place for keeping parents up to date about children's daily routines, progress and development through the use of contact books for babies, contact sheets and development folders for older children. Suggestions and comments received on parent questionnaires are taken on board and acted upon.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a consistent, experienced staff team who are committed to providing a safe, caring and stimulating environment. Rigorous recruitment procedures carried out by the London Region ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. New staff have to undergo a six month probation period which includes an induction process to help familiarise themselves with the Pre School Learning Alliance and the nursery's policies and procedures.

Children play in well organised indoor and outdoor space. They benefit from good levels of support and supervision from staff who are well deployed. However, as the nursery does not currently employ a cook, staff have to take turns to cover in the kitchen. This not only effects the range of meals the nursery is able to provide for children but also impacts on staffing ratios, as numbers of children attending the nursery continue to increase. Play resources and activities are very accessible to children allowing them a high level of independence. All legally required documentation is in place and shared with parents as required. The nursery has a comprehensive operational plan in place which includes a full set of policies and procedures to help promote children's care and education.

Leadership and management are good. The manager and deputy work very well together to support an enthusiastic and consistent staff team. This is done through supervision, training, regular team meetings and appraisals. An effective induction programme is in place for new staff. The management team take advice from the advisory teacher and regularly spend time

in the group rooms to monitor and evaluate the setting's strengths and weaknesses. The current staff team are working continuously to improve and develop the quality of care and education for children.

The setting meet the needs of all the children for whom it provides care and education.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not Applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 that suitable arrangements are in place for the provision of children's meals.

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):

- provide more resources which display numbers and ensure that children have regular access to name cards in the writing area.

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