

# Northwood Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | EY218985                                  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 27 March 2007                             |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Kim Mundy                                 |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Sandy Lane, Northwood, Middlesex, HA6 3HP |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01923 843928                              |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Helen McIlrath                            |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated                                |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](http://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?

Northwood Day Nursery opened in 2002 and it is one of two nurseries run by a private provider. The nursery operates from two spacious modular buildings situated within the secure Joint Services Unit, NATO base in Northwood.

A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.45 to 17.30 except for bank holidays and five days over the Christmas period. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 37 children aged from four-months-old to under five-years on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as some of their parents travel in to work on the base. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 members of staff. Of these, 11 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 thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Good organisation of documentation pertaining to health ensures the children's health is promoted in a very positive way. The nursery is kept very clean in all areas. Staff wear gloves when nappy changing to minimise possible cross infection. However, in the baby room babies are crawling on the floor and people are not required to remove their outdoor shoes before entering; as a result babies may be at risk of infection. Children are protected from unnecessary illness as they do not attend if they are sick. All staff hold a current first aid certificate in order to administer appropriate first aid and medication should the need arise.

This setting places a very strong emphasis on promoting healthy eating for children. The qualified cook orders, prepares and cooks organic produce on site. Excellent food and hygiene procedures are in place, such as probing food to ensure it is cooked and served at the required temperatures. Daily temperature readings of the fridge and freezer are recorded. Children relish home baked apple crisps and bread. They thoroughly enjoy an interesting menu which offers a wide range of tastes, such as lamb with apricots and couscous. In order to encourage children to try soups, they make their own by cutting up and blending the vegetables. This proved very successful, consequently, children now enjoy a variety of home made soups. Children's individual dietary requirements are known and adhered to by staff. Babies milk bottles are clearly labelled and stored in the fridge. All children can access drinks independently when they are thirsty. Staff carefully monitor babies water and milk intake. Toddlers are helped to pour their own drinks and to serve their own food. More able children pour their drinks and serve their meals competently. Children enjoy very sociable and relaxed snack and meal times. They are learning about healthy eating through cooking activities, for example, making fruit salad and on going daily discussions.

Children are excited by the attractive and interesting range of outdoor play activities. Staff have a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework to support a strong and healthy child. Their understanding of each child's stage of development means that the youngest children are confident to try out new skills and set their own limits within the safe environment. Babies are encouraged to stand, crawl and extend their physical skills through interaction with the caring staff. Toddlers and older children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise. They delight in the challenges of a versatile range of outdoor activities; such as climbing on the logs, running, balancing, jumping and manoeuvring cars and bicycles. Staff continue to develop the outdoor area to support all areas of children's development; for example, painting on paper on the fence with large brushes and rollers, digging in the mud, and counting and sorting balls in to bowls. Children are developing their fine motor skills as they pick up, release and arrange various objects.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are very happy, confident and self-assured. They use a variety of good quality toys and play materials appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children can reach toys and resources easily as they are organised in low level storage. For example, babies have access

to treasure baskets and toddlers and older children may choose from stimulating materials stored in drawers and trays.

Babies are able to sleep comfortably in their cots and toddlers have individual rest beds. Good safety measures are in place for sleeping babies as the staff check them every 10 minutes; the temperature of the sleep room is also monitored closely. There is a variety of tables and chairs to meet the individual needs of all children at meal and play times.

Children are very safe and secure on the premises. All visitors to the site require specific passes and are escorted to the nursery premises within the grounds. The nursery also requires visitors to sign in and out of the premises. Very good procedures are in place in the event of a fire. Children practise the fire drill on a monthly basis and this ensures that they know what to do in an emergency. Staff have fire bags available which contain necessary supplies and double buggies are available to help evacuate babies quickly and efficiently. Staff carry out daily visual checks in each room and in the outdoor area to ensure risks are minimised. However, the lock on the fridge in the baby room has broken; therefore it is accessible to children and may pose a safety hazard. A head count is taken during the sessions outdoors and the number of children present is recorded as they leave and return to the building. These robust systems, which are vigilantly carried out by staff, ensure the children's safety.

Children are protected due to staff having a secure knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. All staff attend child protection training on a yearly basis to update their knowledge. Secure systems are in place for recording possible child protection concerns.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The children are split by age into three groups, each having a separate base room. Babies and toddlers enjoy lots of physical contact with the staff which enables them to feel secure and play contentedly. The quality of younger children's learning experiences is being fostered; staff plan an exciting range of activities based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework. There are many activities which encourage babies to learn through using their senses; for example, exploring treasure baskets which contain various objects which are shiny, noisy, soft and hard. Babies have lots of fun in the boat as they play with corn flour and water.

Children are engaged and enthusiastic and have good levels of concentration as they explore the activities and make choices. Continued praise is given to all children and their achievements are celebrated and shared. This encourages the children to feel confident. All children are making good progress as they learn new skills and knowledge such as counting, learning colours and shapes through interaction with staff during everyday routines.

Staff value children's creations; displaying them attractively on wall displays and including them in the individual children's progress files, with accompanying photographs. Children independently access a book corner and play imaginatively; for example, in the role play areas. Babies and toddlers have opportunities to make very good progress in all areas of their development. They clearly enjoy their day in this very warm and homely environment.

All of the children are very happy, secure and developing in confidence and self-esteem. Staff provide a very nurturing environment and place emphasis on their emotional well-being. As a result children are able to flourish.

## Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. Children experience a well balanced curriculum which is very exciting and tailored to their individual learning needs. Staff monitor and record the children's involvement in activities. The information recorded is securely linked to the stepping stones of the early learning goals. However, the system in place is not fully developed in relation to planning the next steps for children's individual learning. Development records include pieces of work and photographs of children involved in activities and give a clear picture of children's attainment. Staff encourage children to make decisions and to self-select resources and equipment. Children play independently, explore and have a positive approach to new experiences and are very well supported by the staff. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities maintains children's high level of interest throughout the day.

Children are making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are able to work as part of a group, take turns and share. They are confident speakers and they engage in conversations with each other and adults. Children listen attentively at song and story time. Staff use puppets and props to provide further interest and excitement; for example, 'five little men in a flying saucer'. This also provides good support for children who speak English as an additional language. Early writing is promoted extremely well and some children begin to write correctly formed letters and words, such as 'spider' and 'worm'. Children's interest in early reading is supported, by the use of books to promote themes and the good labelling around the classroom. They observe their names in the environment; for example, on their coat pegs, lunch mats and individual work drawers. Children are drawing recognisable pictures; for example, spiders and ants with features such as legs and body segments.

Children enjoy a wide range of problem solving activities indoors and out, staff ensure this is fun. They have many good opportunities to sort objects, explore simple addition and subtraction, and floating and sinking. They begin to understand the value of money and weigh fruit during role-play in the greengrocer's shop. Children are counting confidently. They are learning about shape and space as they fit puzzles together and construct with bricks. They use mathematical language in their play, "look he's got a long tail" referring to the dinosaur. Children enjoy a variety of mark making opportunities; for example, after a nature walk children plot the number of mini-beasts they find on a graph. Staff use every day routines to encourage children's mathematical problem solving; for example, "We have six children and six placemats, how many cups do you think we need"? to which some children are able to respond correctly.

Children are developing their imagination as they engage in role-play; for example, in the shoe shop and launderette. They enjoy playing musical instruments. However, they do not listen to a wide range of music or spend enough time participating in planned music and movement sessions. Children are exploring many different textures as they use paint, glue, clay, sand, water and play dough. They are learning about their local community through visits from the nurse and fire brigade. Children use magnifying glasses to observe mini-beasts; they enjoy investigating and exploring living things, such as worms, spiders, plants and seeds. Children are learning how things work and why things happen. They enjoy a wide variety of educational games through the 'Click it' programme, which is taught by a visiting teacher on a weekly basis. Children are increasing their computer skills as they click and drag the mouse. They are finding out how and why things work as they use telephones, magnifying glasses, cash tills and water wheels. They particularly enjoy operating the nursery camera, as they photograph spiders and

worms on their nature walk through the nursery garden. Children are making good progress in all areas of their development.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. They are full of confidence and self-esteem due to very caring staff, who offer on going praise and encouragement for achieving even the smallest of tasks. Children's emotional well-being is positively promoted. They smile broadly with satisfaction as they are asked to water the plants, point out their names on their drawers and lunch placemats, and very proudly show their sticker chart for good toileting. Children are learning about the world in which they live and the beliefs of other people as they celebrate a variety of festivals. They are developing a positive self-image as they participate in themes such as 'ourselves'. Children are very well-behaved as staff manage their behaviour sensitively and appropriately. Babies and toddlers are re-directed or distracted. More able children are able to listen to reason and they know and accept the rules within the setting.

Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported by sensitive staff, who ensure they are familiar with words the children use at home; for example, for their care needs. There are lots of photos to give children visual clues and to support their understanding of the daily routine. None of the children currently attending have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) who has attended relevant training and a suitable special needs policy is in place.

Children benefit greatly by the strong relationships between staff and their parents. The key worker system enables staff to know the children really well and to liaise with parents while coordinating their care and education. Parents are well-informed about the nursery's routine and activities through newsletters, coffee mornings, open evenings and babies and toddler's daily diaries. Each child has a developmental record which is regularly updated by staff and this is given to parents when their child leaves. Parents are aware that the early years curriculum provided is linked to the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage of learning.

Partnership with parents and carers in relation to nursery education is good. They have some opportunities to be involved in their children's learning; for example, providing resources for specific activities. However, systems for involving parents in their child's learning are not fully developed. Parent's opinions matter. Suggestion boxes are available and parent questionnaires are completed yearly. Parents are very complimentary about the service they receive "fabulous, I would recommend it to anyone".

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

This nursery is very well organised. Managers have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and lead the staff team very efficiently. The premises are well organised and good use is made of the space available, particularly the secure and stimulating outdoor space. All staff, including the domestic staff, work well together; they demonstrate enthusiasm for creating a safe and secure learning environment that stimulates children of all ages.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place which supports the safe and efficient management of the setting. Staff continuously improve and develop the service for children. There is a high emphasis on staff training. As a result children benefit from practices which are

in line with current ideas and legislation. Effective systems are in place for the recruitment and employment of new staff. An effective induction procedure has been developed which includes health and safety and understanding of the child protection policy.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are good. The provider, managers and staff work well as a team and share ideas for the future of the setting. The planning process is currently being reviewed to improve practice. The managers ensure that the curriculum is well-balanced and that very effective teaching methods are implemented. All staff members make incidental and planned observations of the children's responses to the activities. They use these effectively to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals. The staff knowledge of the children in their care is good, which enables them to effectively challenge the children in their learning. Staff effectively monitor and evaluate the care and education through monthly staff meetings; they have opportunities to exchange information within the team to improve practice.

All documentation is in place to support the setting and is regularly reviewed and updated. The documents are stored to ensure confidentiality. Children receive a high standard of care in this setting. The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the setting was required to: develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues; ensure children's work and record of achievements and staff training documentation are named and dated; and to keep a concise record of the daily intake of formula feeds and water in relation to bottle fed babies. All staff have knowledge and understanding of child protection issues through attending yearly child protection training. Children's work, records of achievement and staff training documents are named and dated. A concise record of the daily intake of formula feeds and water in relation to bottle fed babies is now kept. As a result, this improves the care and welfare of the children.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was required to: develop the environment to ensure there are more opportunities to extend children's learning and creativity through free play; and to develop planning to ensure story time is age appropriate and that there are regular opportunities for children to develop gross motor skills on large equipment. Staff have considered the use of space and storage of resources which enables children to extend their learning and creativity through free play. Story times are suitably presented to small groups of children and staff make good use of props such as puppets. As a result, their individual needs are met. Children enjoy a range of indoor and outdoor physical activities on a daily basis and consequently, they are developing their large motor skills. Therefore, children's play and learning opportunities are promoted.

### **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):

- carry out a risk assessment to include the use of outdoor shoes in the baby room
- make the fridge in the baby room inaccessible to children.

#### 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):

- continue to develop the system for informing future planning of the next steps for children's learning
- increase the opportunities for children to explore different types of music and movement in a planned and meaningful way
- continue to develop ways in which parents can be more involved in their children's learning.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)