



Thorney Close Child Care Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	318588
Inspection date	14 March 2007
Inspector	Cathryn Parry
Setting Address	Sure Start, Thorney Close Action & Enterprise Centre, 120 Thorndale Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR3 4JQ
Telephone number	0191 5534164
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Registered person	Sunderland Social Services
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?

Thorney Close Child Care Centre is one of several children's centres managed by Sunderland Children's Services. It opened in 1994 and gained children's centre status in 2006. The centre serves the local community and is situated in the Thorney Close area of Sunderland. A maximum of 76 children may attend the centre at any one time. The centre comprises a day nursery, which is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year, a crèche to support parents and carers attending the centre, and a variety of courses and drop-in support groups for parents, carers and their families.

All services are housed in a purpose-built building with outdoor play areas for the children. There are currently 108 children from three months to under five years on roll in the day nursery. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early years education. The crèche offers a maximum of 10 places and operates as required, to support various groups that meet in the centre. The

centre currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

A committee oversees the operations of the centre, including the management of the budget and the recruitment of staff. There is an overall centre manager. She is supported by a management team, which includes the nursery manager, the Cluster Coordinator for Sunderland Central, the Job Linkage manager, the Welfare Rights manager, four local councillors, a church representative, a housing representative and elected local residents. There are 20 staff who work with the children in the day nursery and crèche. All of these hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a further qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are learning excellent personal hygiene practices through consistent routines and positive role modelling. They excitedly brush their teeth following meals, explaining how toothpaste cleans the germs away. This is complemented with well-planned activities and by visits from other professionals, including the Health Development Officer for early years. Comprehensive policies, very good relationships with parents and relevant training ensure individual children are cared for very well should they become ill. This reduces the risk of cross-infection. All staff within the centre have undertaken first aid and food hygiene training, which has a positive impact on children's welfare.

Children's well-being is enriched through accessing a very healthy diet. They show a good understanding of why they need to eat nutritious food, 'so they will have strong muscles and grow big like daddy'. Staff actively manage a superb balance of informing parents of good lifestyle habits and encouraging healthy food options. These include not bringing sweets to nursery and providing nutritious snacks, such as fresh fruit and raw vegetables. Children are becoming increasingly independent in their personal care, for instance, older children help to serve their own lunch and access water from the dispenser. All relevant documentation with regard to health, including specific dietary needs and consent forms are in place and up to date. These positively safeguard children's well-being. All children flourish as they access excellent opportunities for physical play. These include using climbing and balancing equipment in the garden area specifically designed with a large wooden boat and beams. They explore, test and develop physical control on a daily basis. An example of this is where they use a variety of age-appropriate 'sit and ride' toys. Children are active or restful through choice and babies sleep in-line with their individual needs and parent's wishes. The centre has recently become the first Early Years setting in Sunderland to achieve the Wear Healthy Early Years programme. This has a very positive impact on promoting children's overall well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are made very welcoming to children and parents. A combination of large windows and skylights enable children to benefit from natural light whilst playing indoors. The building

is very secure with effective procedures being in place for the collection of children. Consequently, they are well protected. An intercom with video screen ensures members of staff only allow entry to authorised persons. Children are able to explore confidently using high quality resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. The effective organisation of space and the good levels of support provided by staff allow children to move around safely and independently. This helps them to retain a balance of freedom within safe limits. Children's knowledge about personal safety is encouraged by gentle reminders from practitioners to pick up the toys so they do not trip, road safety activities and regular fire drill practises. This positively contributes to children developing a sense of danger and how to keep themselves safe. Those who go on outings are kept safe as staff carry out risk assessments and are vigilant.

All safety equipment is in place reducing the risk of accidents. This includes door hinge protectors and electrical socket covers. Staff complement these by responding positively to hazards, such as mopping up spilt water and sweeping up sand so children don't slip. The use of age-appropriate restraints ensures younger children are kept safe as they sit at the table for meals and activities. Regular risk assessments, both indoors and out, minimise the risk of accidental injury effectively. All staff have attended relevant child protection training and demonstrate a sound understanding of associated issues. Consequently, children are safeguarded well.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and are eager to participate in the wide variety of activities provided. They make progress as staff talk to parents to ensure they have a good understanding of their developmental stage and any specific needs when they start. The planning and recording of children's achievements is currently being reviewed with the main focus being placed on following children's interests. Frequent observations of children do take place. However, developmental files are only completed every eight weeks. Consequently, they do not accurately reflect children's progress. Staff have attended training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and implement this with younger children. Babies' interest is encouraged through a wide variety of man-made and natural resources. They enjoy good experiences that involve using all of their senses, such as listening to classical music, feeling different textures and using mirrors. A very good balance of child-centred and adult-led experiences ensures appropriate challenge for their age and stage of development. Staff are actively involved in children's play, for instance, being a patient in the pretend doctor's surgery. This gives them the opportunity to extend children's thinking. Children delight in using their imagination, including dressing up as tigers and dalmatians. The broad range of resources and appropriate low-level storage stimulates children's overall development.

Nursery education.

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides children with a rich variety of activities which interest them, so they learn through first-hand experiences. Displays, previous plans and photographs show that all areas of learning are being covered well. The new planning system has only been in place for two weeks and is still being established. However, staff show a positive attitude to its implementation and to reviewing

the effective recording of children's progress. Staff offer suggestions and ask questions which challenge children to think and develop their ideas. Children's communication skills are fostered well through various activities, including sharing books. This results in competent speakers and listeners. They have a growing understanding of the natural world through a range of well planned and spontaneous activities. These include exploring the sensory garden and discussing how bees make honey from pollen. Staff regularly extend activities, for example, children make Easter cards and take them to the post office to post them to their homes. This inspires children to be creative and increases their knowledge of the world they live in. Children enjoy representational drawing and are developing good hand and eye coordination. A variety of creative activities, including painting, cutting and sticking, promote children's self-expression whilst having fun. Children use counting and numbers well in everyday play situations. An example of this is where they count out the cups at snack time. They also use mathematical language as they describe how big the tower of bricks is. Fine manipulative skills are developed using threading activities and the use of small tools, such as scissors. Daily opportunities to access computers in the nursery foster children's information technology skills. Children access a good range of well chosen resources which support their learning across all areas. They are involved and interested in their play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A short induction period, including visits with parents, is individually tailored to ensure children settle into the new environment. Children's self-esteem and sense of belonging is encouraged as their creative pictures are widely displayed on the centre walls. Babies' and toddlers' independence is developing as they access baskets of interesting and safe materials easily and freely. Adult support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Staff liaise closely with other professionals and parents. They also attend any relevant training to ensure all individual needs are met. This results in all children being included in a breadth of activities, which raises self-confidence.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They show concern for each other, for instance, when one child mislays his favourite toy bunny, another finds and returns it. Children share and take turns well, including waiting to serve their own lunch. The staff's confident approach to equality and diversity actively contributes to children's positive attitudes to the wider community. This is complemented with access to a wide selection of resources and the opportunity to celebrate festivals from around the world. Consequently, children have a growing understanding of difference. Consistent encouragement ensures children are developing a good knowledge of what is right and wrong. Staff use positive strategies for managing behaviour and encourage children to use good manners.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parental feedback is encouraged in a variety of ways, including verbally on a day-to-day basis and by the use of questionnaires. Very good relationships with parents are highly beneficial to the continuity of care that the children receive. Detailed information is shared with them daily, including written daily diaries for younger children. Newsletters and notices in the setting ensure parents have regular written information on the activities and experiences taking place. Parents are actively encouraged to

be involved in the centre. Examples of this are borrowing books, participating in fund raising activities and bringing items in, such as recyclable materials for sticking. The centre utilises parent's expertise to support children's learning. One parent brought x-rays, bandages and empty medicine boxes to enhance the children's role play. High emphasis is put on partnership with parents, which has a positive impact on children's overall well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management are good. The manager shows a commitment to the professional development of her team, encouraging training in all areas. She is also keen to further her own knowledge and understanding of childcare and nursery education through attending relevant courses. She then cascades new information to the staff during training days. Regular team meetings and individual supervisions ensure staff are well supported. The manager has a clear understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage, enabling her to foster good practice throughout. She puts a high priority on children's personal, social and emotional development as a basis for all learning. The manager regularly monitors and evaluates practice, which has a positive impact on the high quality of care and education provided. The local authority's robust recruitment procedure ensures all staff are suitably vetted to ensure children are safeguarded well. All staff who work with the children have at least an appropriate Level 3 qualification. The manager works very closely with the deputy manager. As a team they strive to improve the centre by being involved with various local and national initiatives. They are passionate and enthusiastic about children and their families receiving a high quality service. They are also keen to share this good practice with other childcare providers.

Children's play opportunities are maximised through the effective organisation of space, time and resources. Each of the rooms has different areas, so children can play independently or with others. They can participate in a range of quiet, creative and boisterous activities. The outdoor space is effectively sectioned and imaginatively designed to inspire all children to explore the environment. The flexible routine incorporates opportunities to go on outings, for instance, to the waterfowl park and to invite visitors in. Resources are attractively displayed and easily accessible to children, which encourages participation. Clear effective labelling develops word and letter recognition. Individual documentation is stored confidentially. Consequently, children's well-being and privacy are respected throughout.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the provider was requested to review procedures for daily risk assessments, particularly with regard to the outdoor play area. Comprehensive risk assessments are now in place, which have a positive impact on safeguarding children.

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

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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):

- make improvements as indicated in the nursery education section below.

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 planning of activities and recording of children's progress (also applies to childcare).

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