



## Natural Choice Nurseries Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY336299
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 February 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Janice Clark
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<b>Registered person</b>	Natural Choice Nurseries Ltd
<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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Natural Choice Day Nursery is owned by a limited company. It opened in 2006 and operates from the whole building, a former house, in Alveston, South Gloucestershire. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens five days a week from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round, except Christmas week and on bank holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery offers care for children up to five years. Currently 32 children are attending on a variety of sessions. There are three children receiving funding for nursery education.

There are seven members of staff who work with the children including the manager of the nursery. Of these, five members of staff hold an appropriate early years qualification and one is working towards a qualification. They receive support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children thrive in a warm, clean, bright and colourful, well maintained environment. They enjoy the benefits of a routine that ensures a proper balance of rest and play. Staff promote children's good health through sensible, appropriate policies and procedures that are implemented in most areas of the nursery. Older children become independent in their self-care skills. They follow good hygiene routines and they learn the importance of why they should wash their hands. For example, staff encourage them to wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet 'to get all the germs off.' They remind children to flush the toilet, use soap, dry their hands with a paper towel and to 'cover their cough'. This assists in reducing cross infection. However, some hygiene routines are inconsistently applied.

Children begin to learn the advantages of a healthy and nutritious diet. All snacks and meals contain fresh, organic and locally produced ingredients. Staff plan menus to ensure that there is a large variety of food offered to children in any one week, such as fish, food of the world, vegetarian meals, cooks' specials and some children's favourites. Children eat wholemeal toast or cereals for breakfast. Snacks consist of fresh fruit, raisins, rice cakes or organic biscuits. Some examples of lunches and teas provided are chicken curry with rice, vegetable bake with new potatoes and broccoli and sausage hotpot. Couscous and salad, toasted cheese fingers or home made oat cookies are just a few examples of teas. However, not all children take advantage of the choice of food that is available to them. Children enjoy drinks of organic juice, milk or water with their food. Drinking water is available to all children throughout the day. Staff explain to children that they should drink water because it is good for them and that it is the best thing to drink if they are thirsty. As a result, children learn the importance of drinking regularly as a way to maintain their good health. Children sit at tables in small groups for snacks and meals and this assists in promoting children's social skills. There are some opportunities for children to further extend their independence during this time. Staff consult parents regarding children's dietary and religious needs and these are taken in to account.

All children play in the garden when the weather is fine and a large adventure play unit is available for older children to use. Younger children toddle about as they explore and investigate the garden, they sit on wheeled toys and use their feet to move them along the path. Inside, they enjoy rummaging through a bright and colourful ball pool. Older children throw, catch and kick balls, ride, sit on and manoeuvre wheeled toys and use their bodies to bob up and down on a see-saw. They carefully walk across a bridge, climb up, slide down and hide inside the large apparatus. Children enthusiastically join in and follow instructions to move their bodies in a variety of ways when listening to a 'Sticky kids' CD indoors. All these activities assist in developing children's large physical skills and help to promote their co-ordination. However, all children do not have access to a wide range of appropriate equipment to further extend or support the development of these skills. Staff do not plan older children's physical play activities effectively to ensure that they are sufficiently challenged in this area.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in safety in a secure indoor and outdoor environment. They grow in confidence because they are able to move around freely and unrestricted. Babies and young children have space so that they can explore, crawl, and toddle safely. However, there is insufficient domestic furniture in the baby unit to enable staff to sit in comfort whilst feeding babies and to assist young children to develop mobility and continue normal life experiences. Staff clean and check resources regularly to ensure that they are safe and hygienic for children to use. Toys and equipment are bright, colourful and easily accessible so that children are able to make some independent choices in their play. Staff have been able to recognise and minimise most hazards to children. For example, radiators are covered appropriately, safety gates are in place, all electrical sockets are covered and bark is used as a safety surface under the large activity apparatus in the garden. Good safety procedures are in place to ensure that babies and young children are safe whilst sleeping. Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff request them to walk not run in the nursery and to move from room to room in an orderly manner. All fire safety equipment is in place. Staff and children practise the fire evacuation procedure regularly. This adds to children's awareness of keeping safe.

Staff take steps to safeguard and promote children's welfare. They have a satisfactory understanding of child protection in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Procedures for the administration of medication and recording of accidents are followed consistently by all staff. More than half of the staff team hold current first aid certificates and there are well stocked first aid boxes available throughout the nursery. However, some policies and procedures regarding children's health and welfare lack detail.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are excited and happy to come to the setting and eagerly separate from their parents. The staff are enthusiastic and caring, consequently children respond well to them and this assists in building good relationships. They use the Birth to three matters framework to plan fun, meaningful activities and to assess the progress of children under the age of three-years. Some activities are topic based and are synonymous throughout the age groups. Children under the age of two-years are cared for in a comfortable self-contained unit on the first floor. Staff interact with the children, they play peek-a-boo and children chuckle with laughter and enthusiastically try to mimic them by hiding their faces behind their hands. Children benefit from playing with a wide range of bright, colourful toys and resources. They stack different sized rings, sort shapes, play in the ball pool and they use their bodies to create movement as they sit on rockers, for example, to rock sheep. They enjoy interesting and safe experiences that involve using their senses. For instance, they bounce, mould and shake crazy soap and play with musical instruments. They explore treasure baskets with some interesting items, such as wooden egg cups, rolling pins, pumice stones, brushes and some metal objects. However, they do not regularly have opportunities to explore and investigate natural materials, such as sand and water or a wide range of different tactile objects, such as coconuts or gourds, to further stimulate their curiosity and sense of discovery.

At times, children from the age of 18 months integrate with the older children on the ground floor. They occasionally separate for some activities but join together for free play. During this time children are able to make some independent choices in their play. For example, there is a wide range of toys and resources available to them. They build train tracks, complete puzzles, look at books, play in the home corner and dress-up. However, due to the organisation of the playroom, children do not always gain maximum benefit from free play activities. Children playing on the ground floor have daily access to creative activities and sand and water experiences. However, unless they are part of the planned morning activity, access to these materials is only for a short time in the afternoon.

All children start the day with a 'welcome song'. In this way children greet each other, learn about each other's names and how they are feeling. Staff use Makaton to sign the song and some of the children are beginning to copy them. They enthusiastically sing songs, such as 'Miss Polly had a dolly', 'Old MacDonald' and 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'. Staff use visual aids in the form of a song sack to make this time more interesting. For example, children pull sausages out of the bag and they have to think of a song that relates to them. Children enjoy peaceful and tranquil moments where they have time to relax and reflect on their morning's play. For instance, after lunch time, two older children lay on cushions, looking at books, chatting and enjoying each other's company.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones, as a result children enjoy a range of interesting, fun activities and experiences. Staff are enthusiastic in their delivery of the curriculum, they offer clear instructions, interact well with the children, listen to them, question them appropriately and allow them time to ask questions as well. For instance, children were eager to find out about where the rain comes from. The member of staff was extremely patient with them, offering answers to satisfy their curiosity but also to make them think and this prompted more questions. Consequently, children are motivated and eager to learn. Staff regularly observe and assess children's progress and learning. They record these observations appropriately and share them with parents. However, staff do not use these observations to fully establish what the children should do next or to recognise gaps in the curriculum. As a result children do not make regular and continuous progress in their learning. The nursery's planning system is still in its development stage and although plans cover all six areas of learning, they do not yet inform staff as to how they should differentiate activities to accommodate more able children. Therefore, some activities lack sufficient challenge.

Children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Staff make stories interesting to children by keeping them involved and children listen and concentrate well. They confidently speak out during small group time as they talk about the weather, days of the week, month and year. Staff encourage them to recall past experiences and to predict what they are going to do next and this helps children to understand about time. Children are beginning to use a sign language, such as Makaton, this assists children to develop language skills and discover other means of communication. They begin to recognise their names and familiar words in a room that is rich with print. However, children do not regularly practise writing skills, use writing for a purpose in their play or link sounds to letters.

Children learn to count and recognise numbers during welcome time. They practise simple number rhymes, such as 'Five currant buns.' Staff reinforce maths language, for example, when children were using glitter during a creative activity. They were asked to use 'a little not a lot,' to 'tip the container up a little bit more' and some children used a 'mountain' and others a 'little big mountain' of glitter. Songs, such as 'When Goldilocks went to the house of the bears' help children to understand about different sizes. However, there are few opportunities for counting and problem solving in every day routines and activities.

Children learn about their bodies and how they work through discussions before and after music and movement. They feel their hearts beating and talk about what they need to eat to give them energy. Children enjoy creative activities, such as cutting, painting, sticking and cooking and these help children to develop fine motor skills. They use a variety of objects including, fir cones, sponges, Wellington boots and vegetables to print patterns on pictures. They use three dimensional shapes in their creative play and this helps children to understand about different sizes and forms of shape. However, they have few opportunities to use a variety of malleable materials. Children use computers to reinforce their creative learning, for example, using a drawing programme. Staff are very patient and supportive in this area. Children were encouraged to choose colours to make a picture and staff assisted while they printed a copy of their work.

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

The provision is good.

Friendly staff provide a warm, welcoming environment and enjoy positive relationships with parents and children. Labelled displays of children's work, as well as photographs of themselves, assist in promoting a positive self-image and a sense of belonging. Children find out about each other and how they are feeling through singing and signing a welcome song. They learn about their community and the people who work and live there through regular walks to the post office. Children become aware of the wider world through play activities and they learn about other cultures and traditions, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. There are many positive images of diversity around the nursery, for example, displays of people from around the world, books, dressing-up clothes, puzzles, dolls and play people. This assists children in finding out about the similarities and differences of others.

Staff promote positive behaviour through praise and reward and they offer good explanations as to why some behaviour is inappropriate. They use strategies that are appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. For example, a member of staff used good negotiation tactics when an older child wanted to read a book instead of moving on to the next activity. Children work co-operatively together, for instance, staff play 'Mission Impossible' music when it is tidy up time and children eagerly work together to put toys and resources away before the music stops. Staff are good role models, and in return children learn to be polite, respect others, share and to take turns. They talk quietly and calmly and children listen intently to instructions. As a result, behaviour in the nursery is good. Staff have a positive attitude towards working with children and their families with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All children are included in all activities. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parents receive good information when they first start at the nursery including some policies and procedures. Further policy documents are easily accessible to them on the notice board or in a folder. This leads to good communication and understanding which results in a happy, comfortable atmosphere for children to play. Staff are very sensitive to the parents and children's needs when they are settling into the nursery. For example, they offer a slow transitional period from the home into the setting and staff use this opportunity to discuss children's individual needs. This enables younger children, in particular, to benefit from continuity and routines similar to what they already know. Staff find out about children's interests and they use this information to help to settle the children in, for example, their favourite stories and songs. As a result, children are happy and confident to come to the nursery. Staff discuss children's development and assessment records with parents both formally and informally. In addition, they make good use of daily diaries, this is a two way method of communication that helps both parties become aware of what is happening in a child's life. The setting welcomes parents' views and they are valued and acted upon. Parents find staff to be friendly, approachable and helpful. Thus, contributing to children's general well-being.

Partnership with parents of children in receipt of Nursery Education is satisfactory. Parents receive limited information about the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones, when their children initially start at the nursery, to enable them to be fully involved in their children's learning and to help them to extend their learning into the home. Staff do not obtain sufficient information from parents about their children's learning before they enter the nursery to assist them to build on what they already know.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff work well as a team to help to promote an environment where children can play safely, enjoy activities and make a positive contribution. Children play in a bright, colourful, child friendly environment where rooms are imaginatively decorated with different themes. For example, the babies' dining and activity room is a 'pond' and the toddlers play room is a 'farm'. Children from two years to five years use the large play room on the ground floor for free play. This is a bright spacious room with a wide range of toys but it is not organised effectively to ensure that children gain the maximum benefit from their play. There is a rigorous recruitment procedure in place to determine the suitability of new staff and an induction programme to inform staff of their roles and responsibilities. However, some procedures are inconsistently applied in the setting, such as health and hygiene routines. All required policies and procedures are in place although some documents lack detail. For example, the child protection procedure and the complaints procedure. This does not fully promote children's health and welfare. There is a key worker system in place and staff know the children well. The manager organises the staffing rotas well to help to promote continuity of care for children. This contributes to children's well-being. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. Regular staff meetings assist in promoting good communication between staff and their enthusiasm contributes to children enjoying interesting and fun activities. All of the staff are keen to extend their knowledge of

childcare through further training and development. The setting is committed to improving their practice and is currently completing a quality assurance scheme. However, the system for monitoring and evaluating the programme for nursery education has failed to identify gaps in the curriculum. As a result, this hinders children's progress and attainment in some areas of learning.

### **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 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **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):

- further implement the Birth to three matters framework to ensure that children have regular access to a wide range of tactile objects and natural experiences; ensure that activities are organised effectively in the large play room so that children gain maximum benefit
- provide appropriate domestic furniture in the baby unit to enable staff to sit in comfort whilst feeding babies and to assist young children to develop mobility and continue normal life experiences
- ensure that all policies and procedures are in line with the required National Standards

#### **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):



- evaluate the children's assessment and development records to ensure that they are used to inform the planning of children's future learning opportunities, in particular challenges for more able children
- develop and implement a system to assess the strengths and weaknesses in the education provision to ensure gaps are highlighted and actioned
- provide more detailed information for parents regarding the Foundation stage and find ways for them to become more involved in children's learning in the home

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