

# Child First Northampton

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY342823
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Anne Archer / Sarah Measures
<b>Setting Address</b>	Moulton Lodge, Moulton Way North, Moulton, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN3 7RW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 790 440
<b>E-mail</b>	northampton@childfirst.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Child Care & Learning Group
<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?

Child First Northampton is one of five nurseries run by Childcare and Learning (Ravenstone) Ltd. It opened in 2006 and operates from Moulton Lodge, a converted Georgian Listed building, situated in its own grounds in Moulton, Northamptonshire. A maximum of 80 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children have access to outdoor play.

There are currently 44 children on roll aged from birth to under eight years. Of these, eight children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village and surrounding areas. The nursery employs 10 childcare staff, eight of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene practices and routines as they become increasingly independent in their personal care. They learn to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and after playing outside. Staff caring for young children adhere to strict hygiene routines to ensure that babies and toddlers remain healthy. Children learn about being appropriately dressed when taking part in outdoor activities and staff take measures to protect children from the harmful aspects of the sun. Children's welfare is safeguarded because there is always a member of staff who has a current certificate in paediatric first aid on duty to administer first aid in the event of an accident. There are appropriate procedures in place for staff to follow if a child becomes unwell and sleeping babies and children are monitored regularly. Children develop physical skills as they take part in a variety of activities. Mobile children have outdoor play twice a day where they can for instance, climb and balance on the train or develop their skills on sit and ride toys. Babies are taken out for a walk in the grounds so they can enjoy the benefits of fresh air.

Children develop an awareness of the importance that healthy eating has in developing their good health as they enjoy a range of fresh and dried fruits at snack time in the morning and afternoon. Children are offered regular drinks and older children begin to learn the importance of taking in regular fluids as they learn to pour their own drinks. Children benefit from a social atmosphere where good table manners are encouraged as they sit together with staff in the dining room to have their lunch which, like all meals, is cooked on the premises using fresh ingredients. Children's individual dietary needs are taken into account when menus are planned and throughout the cooking and presentation process to ensure children are provided with the foods that their parents have requested. Staff caring for babies adhere to their individual feeding and weaning routines. Babies are held whilst being bottle fed and records are kept of their food intake for parents.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is undergoing refurbishment and presents itself, in most areas, as a bright, welcoming environment for children and parents. In some cases room usage has changed with each room being equipped with suitable and appropriate equipment, furniture, toys and resources. Children are on the whole cared for in a secure environment where risk of accidental injury is minimised by staff's vigilance and good practices such as risk assessments, fire safety measures and clear procedures for when taking children out of the nursery which reduce the opportunity for potential accidents. Children learn about the importance of safety as they respond to clear guidance from staff during both indoor and outdoor activities. However, on several occasions during inspection, children's safety and security were compromised due to poor management of staff with at times insufficient staff available to support those staff caring for children. Particular issues relate to the security of the front door and the outdoor play area.

Children are able to choose from a range of good quality toys and resources and these and furniture and equipment are regularly maintained by staff to ensure children's health and safety when using them. Children's well-being is safeguarded by staff's knowledge of child protection issues, how to use the Local Safeguarding Children Procedures and their understanding of their responsibilities for the welfare of the children in their care.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and children settle well at the nursery because they and their parents are warmly welcomed by staff. The environment is decorated with attractive and colourful displays which include samples of children's own art work and so attract their interest. Babies and children gain confidence through routines and the close relationships they develop with staff and with other children. Children develop their independence as they express their ideas during play using a range of resources which capture their interest. For instance, babies enjoy feeling the different textures in the treasure baskets full of natural resources such as corks, shells and wooden spoons. They also like to feel the fabric of the different drapes around the room. Staff working with children under two and those working with children aged two to three take account of the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning activities and use their observations and assessments of the children's development to plan activities while readily responding to children's interests.

### **Nursery Education**

Children are happy, enjoy coming to nursery and show a positive attitude to learning. They are confident and play well on their own and with others. Children are generally involved, motivated and engaged in an adequate range of developmentally appropriate activities. However, organisation of space and routines does not allow children to freely choose from a balanced range of activities. Children are keen to offer their ideas and respond well to adult input such as when they plant seeds and are asked what the seeds need to help them grow.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most children are developing into confident learners and access activities independently. Staff plan an interesting range of activities, taking into account children's interests. Although for organisational reasons, these do not always offer opportunities across all six areas of learning. A new system of observation and assessment has been introduced very recently. Both instantaneous and focussed observations are taken of children's play and assessments are made of children's learning. However, observations are not currently linked to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals to enable staff to assess children's progress and plan for the next steps in individual children's learning.

Staff provide group and one to one support as required. Although not all staff are experienced in providing support in funded nursery education situations, there are staff who have developed effective skills in encouraging and questioning children to make them think and progress. However, they do not always make the most of all learning opportunities such as during nursery routines. Although staff's management of children's behaviour is on the whole appropriate and supportive, there are occasions when situations relating to staffing impact on staff's ability to manage children's behaviour and children's safety is compromised.

Children have opportunities to use their imagination as they take part in craft activities, experiment with musical instruments and participate in role play often based on first hand experiences such as when outside playing on the train. However, children do not always have free access to indoor creative activities due to the lay out and use of the pre-school rooms. Children's physical development is catered for through a range of indoor and outdoor activities. Children are developing language skills by staff engaging them in conversation and carefully constructing discussions and questions to develop vocabulary and encourage language for thinking such as 'what do you think?' and 'do you remember?'. Most children recognise their own name cards and a few children can also recognise other children's. Some children attempt

to trace their names and the more able are beginning to form letters, encouraged by staff to do so correctly. Children show enjoyment when looking at books alone and in groups. They sit and listen intently to stories read to them by staff and often join in with familiar ones. Children enjoy joining in with familiar rhymes and songs such as 'Wind the Bobbin Up' and 'Incy Wincey Spider'.

Children are starting to recognise numbers when drawing round stencils and some children can count reliably to ten. They participate in activities with 'compare bears' to learn about size and go on walks to look for different shapes around their environment. However, opportunities are missed to reinforce children's practical mathematical learning during nursery routines such as at snack time. Children develop knowledge and understanding of the world when they participate in activities relating to their local environment and when they learn about the practices within their own and other cultures such as St. Patrick's Day and Chinese New Year. There is evidence to support the development of children's mouse and computer skills although the pre-school computer is not currently available to the children. Children do however have regular access to other simple equipment such as calculators and a digital camera. Overall, children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle quickly as staff take account of their individual needs and personalities when welcoming them. The nursery offers a flexible settling in period to facilitate a smooth induction. Children develop a sense of belonging as they form relationships with staff and their peers. Children begin to appreciate the diversity of the society in which we live as they participate in activities about their own and other cultures and beliefs such as Mothers Day and Hanukah. Whilst the person responsible for special educational needs is fairly new to the post, strategies are in place to identify and support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff welcome support and advice from other professionals.

Generally children behave well. They learn to be kind to each other, to take turns and share, as they respond to the praise and clear and consistent guidelines set by staff. Older children are familiar with and show some understanding of rules while all children enjoy the security of established routines. However, on occasion, when there are insufficient staff to manage a situation, staff struggle to maintain calm. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The care, welfare and development of children at the nursery is promoted through the positive working relationships being developed with parents. Information about children's needs and interests are sought from parents before the child joins the nursery and this is used to help settle the child. Parents of children under two receive daily written information from their child's main carer so they are fully aware of the level of care their child receives. All parents receive written information about how the nursery operates and parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education receive a local authority leaflet about the scheme. However, parents do not receive any information about how the nursery implements the Foundation Stage curriculum. There are monthly newsletters and regular parents evenings for them to find out more about nursery life and they receive verbal feedback on a daily basis about how their child has been.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and welfare are supported by well maintained documentation and clear record keeping. The manager, although fairly new to the provision, is experienced in managing childcare settings and there is an appropriately qualified named deputy to take charge in her absence. Staff are well qualified for their role and are fully aware of their responsibilities to ensure that children's care and learning is well supported. However, due to the many changes that have been made and continue to be made to the premises, the overall size of the premises and the location and use of staff, there is sometimes a negative impact on the security and safety of the children which staff have little control over. For instance, when staff struggle to care for the children and respond to the front door bell to let in parents and visitors or when using the front outdoor play area, to supervise those children at play when other children need to be taken to the toilet.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Satisfactory systems are in place to monitor the educational provision for three and four year olds. The manager is fully aware of gaps in the curriculum and has clear plans for the development of nursery education. There are clear recruitment, induction and appraisal systems in place, the latter only recently introduced to staff. The manager and deputy support the staff delivering the nursery education programme and have systems in place such as visits to the pre-school areas and meetings with the staff to monitor and evaluate progress. Staff welcome suggestions for improvement positively and are committed and enthusiastic about their role in children's learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration. 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):

- make sure there are sufficient staff available to ensure that those working directly with children can effectively meet the safety, welfare and developmental needs of all the children present
- ensure the premises and outside play area are secure at all times and that children are not able to leave unsupervised or visitors enter the premises unannounced

### **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):

- improve staff's awareness of the Foundation Stage in order to ensure a balanced choice of activities are offered to children, and to ensure staff make the most of all learning opportunities
- improve the system of observation and assessment in order to gain a full picture of children's stages of development and ensure that is used to plan for the next steps in their individual learning
- improve the information provided to parents as to how their child is learning through the Foundation Stage.

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