

# Early Learners Centre Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 253081

**Inspection date** 22 May 2007

**Inspector** Gill Ogden

**Setting Address** North Notts College of Further Education, Carlton Road, Worksop,  
Nottinghamshire, S81 7HP

**Telephone number** 01909 504525

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**Registered person** North Notts College

**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](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?

Early Learner's Centre Day Nursery was registered in 1994 and is run by North Nottinghamshire College, Worksop. It operates from purpose built premises situated in the grounds of the college. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:30 to 17:30 hours. A holiday club operates in the school holidays.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children at any one time and currently there are 39 children on roll. This includes 16 children who receive funding for nursery education and children who have learning difficulties/disabilities. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

Of the eight staff working with the children, seven hold a relevant Early Years qualification and the other one is working towards hers. Two staff are currently upgrading their qualifications. The nursery is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and achieved its accreditation in 2006.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's good health is given high priority in the nursery. Effective systems are in place to minimise cross-infection. For example, a staff rota ensures that whoever is preparing food does not change nappies on that day. Parents are given clear information about which illnesses prevent children from attending and staff are consistent in reminding parents about this. Rigorous routines are in place to keep the premises clean such as not only using plastic tablecloths when children have food but ensuring that those, as well as the tables, are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray after each use. Children quickly develop good personal hygiene habits and become independent in their self-care because, for example, they have easy access to the toilets and know the hand washing routine and tissues are placed where they can easily reach them if they need to wipe their noses.

Children play outdoors each day so get enough fresh air and exercise. They use a variety of equipment that helps them develop strong bodies and good co-ordination. For example, they thoroughly enjoy the climbing frame and slide, riding scooters and tricycles and manoeuvring them competently, throwing balls through the basket ball hoop and balancing on wooden blocks. If any children need to rest or sleep they are made comfortable in a quiet corner on day beds.

There is a well thought-out menu that ensures children get a well balanced meal and snacks during the day. For example, a main meal could be tuna and sweet corn tortilla and potatoes with fruit salad or chicken stew with dumplings and yoghurt. Staff work closely with the college caterers to ensure that all dietary needs can be met such as providing meals made using only organic produce for one child. Snacks choices include a variety of fresh fruit pieces, vegetable sticks and cheese and crackers. Fresh drinking water is available for children all the time and they also have milk at snack time and juice with lunch. Staff sit and enjoy lunch with the children so it is a sociable time with lots of lively conversation.

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

The provision is good.

An excellent access system to the premises means that children are safe and secure both indoors and out. A video intercom means that unwanted visitors are stopped at the gate to the outdoor area. A high chain link fence means that children can see out easily but no-one can get to them. The building is very well maintained and thorough checks are carried out regularly on all the electrical equipment in line with the college systems. Risk assessments are regularly completed and all the necessary safety equipment is in place indoors such as low gates or high handles on doors and socket covers. Toys and play equipment are inviting to children and suitable for their purpose. As well as staff being vigilant in their supervision of children they also support children well to learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they prompt them not to run around indoors and encourage them to keep the environment safe by cleaning up any sand or water spills. Parents are encouraged to support activities such as helping children learn about road safety.

Children are further safeguarded because staff have a solid understanding of their child protection responsibilities and these are made clear to parents in the prospectus. Staff go on training regularly to keep up to date with the latest guidelines. However, the written procedure

for dealing with any allegations made within the setting is not clear enough to provide a fully secure framework for children's safety.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy when they arrive in the nursery and have fun during their time there. They quickly get involved in all the activities, approach staff confidently and have warm and caring relationships with them. Staff show great interest in them as individuals, for example, remembering that a child is due to go on holiday the next day and recognising his excitement about it. Children soon rise to the staff's expectations that they will become independent by, for example, collecting their own plates at lunch time, getting them filled and carrying them safely back to their table. They move comfortably between the variety of activities that are set out to support their development and learning. Children engage themselves fully in their play with Lego, glue, sand, books, home corner, painting and drawing. They let staff know when they want to play with the water and help them to fill the water tray with a bucket. All children take part in all activities at the level they feel comfortable. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is used effectively by staff to reflect on how they can support children's development through these activities and continue to keep them interested. Activities for children who attend during the holidays are planned informally. Staff usually talk to children about what they would like to do and then link their interests to theme weeks.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff have a solid understanding of the Foundation Stage. They plan for each individual child in their key work group based on thorough recorded observations of them and evaluations of their progress against the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Planning is initially based on the comments parents make about their children both verbally and through the 'All about me' books as well as staff's own observations. Clearly identified next steps for individual children, over an approximate six week period, ensures that each child is challenged on an ongoing basis. Staff use effective teaching methods. They respond to children's interests and follow their thinking. For example, a child decides that he is using pretend tools to mend furniture in the nursery. He tells the staff and asks them to let him know if the chairs and table they are using need 'fixing'. They join in with this play, holding conversations with the child, testing out chairs to see if they are now safe and congratulating him on good work. Another child uses a hammer to tap on the radiator. A member of staff prompts his thinking about what kind of sound it makes and what kind of material it might be made of. She then encourages him to tap on other different surfaces to compare the sounds. This type of interaction helps children to explore and reinforce their learning across all the areas. The timing of the session allows flexibility for this kind of unplanned learning. A wide range of resources are easily accessible to children and staff have developed an increasing variety of teaching resources such as topic boxes. There are some purposeful interactive displays to support children's learning, such as collages of plant growth and children's own photographs to show how they have changed since they were babies. However, some displays that are key to supporting children's learning, such as number and letter, are not in place and not all displays are visible enough to attract children's attention easily. Children use the outdoor space for a variety of activities and it is possible to use outdoors all the time because a classroom size area is under cover. However, this has not yet been developed fully so that children can choose to learn either outside or inside throughout every session.

Children make good, secure progress in all the areas of learning. They are interested and confident to experiment with toys and resources. They listen well to staff at circle time, paying close attention to any instructions or information they are given. For example, they move to music quietly and slowly or more actively as staff have asked them to in line with the kind of music being played. They recall past events such as remembering which 'planet' music they like best whilst listening to an excerpt from Elgar's 'Mars'. As well as becoming increasingly independent regarding their personal needs they begin to take on responsibility for their environment by, for example, washing up resources they have used before putting them away. Children communicate with each other all the time, often using signs to reinforce their spoken word. They enjoy stories and looking at books on their own or with staff. They recognise their own names and some recognise names of their friends. They can link sounds to letters and show this when staff sound out initial letters of names for them to guess whose name it might be. They greatly enjoy games that help them to understand mathematical concepts such as using toy animals to talk about colour and size and then go on to place them under, on top of, by the side of and behind a box. They count in everyday situations and recognise numerals such as by using a shape matching toy, however, there are no clear number displays on the walls to support this learning further. They demonstrate their knowledge of different shapes when they guess that a box is a cuboid and then decide with staff's help that it is a cube. Children show great interest in technology, especially computers, and some easily use them to write their names but some have difficulty recognising letters on the key board because there are no letter lines displayed to help them check and remember. They use the mouse to click on images that they previously recorded using a Digiblu camera. They understand how sand running through an hourglass relates to time through regularly using it to gauge the time they have left to play before tidying up. They are fascinated by plant growth and looking at pictures of themselves as babies. Children develop their small hand skills well through exposure to a variety of tools and equipment such as pencils, brushes, chalk, scissors, pin boards and puzzles and concentrate carefully when they use them. They are free to express themselves creatively through activities such as role play, painting and 3-D modelling and use their senses and imaginations playing with water and sand.

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

The provision is good.

All children and families are made very welcome in the nursery. Close attention is paid to children's individuality and plenty of information is gathered from parents initially so that staff are able to include children well from the start. Staff work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure that any children who have additional needs are included effectively. Children learn to feel part of their local community through visiting, for example, the college library to listen to stories and The Bistro to have their snack. They also develop an understanding of the wider community through welcoming visitors such as paramedics and guide dogs. A variety of appropriate resources and activities such as celebrating festivals help children to learn about the wider world and develop respect for all members of society. The use of consistent, appropriate methods by staff help children to quickly resolve any conflicts between themselves and encourage them to consider others in the way they behave. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Relationships between staff and parents are warm and purposeful and parents speak highly about the quality of the provision generally and in particular the progress their children have made since attending. A variety of methods are used to ensure parents have every opportunity to participate fully in their children's care

and learning. There are some very useful displays in the entrance area which give parents lots of information about where they can get help related to a range of parenting issues and also more specific information about what is going on in the nursery. Plans are displayed for all to see and parents help children to find their photograph and name card to attach to a visual register as they arrive. A parent newsletter is produced each half term to link in with the topic the children are working on. It includes tips on activities that can be done at home and words of songs and rhymes so that parents are helped to understand and support their children's learning. Parents comment very favourably on the usefulness of the key worker system. The use of a purpose-developed 'All about me' book helps parents to become involved in their children's learning and development from the start and provides the key focus for children's achievements and next steps. Regular parent evenings give them further opportunities to have more formal discussions with their children's key workers apart from the everyday exchanges of information.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the nursery impacts favourably on children's welfare. The manager and registered person are well aware of their responsibilities. Systems for staff recruitment, induction and appraisal are in place and working effectively. The manager is well qualified and experienced and staff are encouraged to upgrade their qualifications as well as attending regular in house and local training events. Staff are deployed effectively in the nursery and because the manager and deputy are supernumerary there is always a good ratio of staff to children. The premises are fairly well set out to meet the children's needs but the outdoor area has yet to be developed to create a fully stimulating environment for all the children. Documentation provides a supportive framework for children's care. All the necessary records are kept accurately. Most of the other necessary documentation is comprehensive. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager of the nursery has delegated responsibility appropriately to the staff to ensure they are totally involved and motivated in everything that happens. This ensures there is a strong staff team who are aware of their strengths and areas for development and who know their contributions are valued. The manager retains an overall vision for the future and works closely with advisory staff to monitor the provision. She has been pro-active in becoming involved in an innovative national project on leadership and is gradually implementing ideas from this.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

All the recommendations from the previous inspection have been acted on. There are now more resources in place that reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity and disability which helps children understand and develop respect for everyone and contributes towards promoting the self-esteem of all the children who attend. Accident records now include all the necessary details so this contributes to a stronger framework for children's overall care.

Regarding nursery education, children are now grouped effectively to ensure they all get the most out of activities. Individual play plans clearly identify children's next learning challenges.

## **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):

- include more detail in the procedures to be followed in the event of a child abuse allegation being made against a member of staff.

#### **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):

- increase displays that support children's understanding of letters and numbers
- develop systems to allow children to access the outdoor play space more freely and use it to support all areas of learning (also applies to care).

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)