

# Patchwork Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	254284
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Christine Eglinton
<b>Setting Address</b>	Silver Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 4TF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603 400647
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Patchwork Childcare
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Patchwork Childcare has been registered for many years and was previously known as St Mary Magdalene Pre-school. The provider offers an after school provision at Mousehold First School in Norwich. The pre-school operates from community rooms attached to St Mary Magdalene Church in Norwich. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during term time from 09:15 to 11:45 and from 12:15 to 14:45. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 55 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 32 receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school has experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from playing in a clean environment and have good access to clean and well maintained toys and equipment. Staff use good hygiene practices during nappy changing such as wearing protective gloves and aprons, which helps to promote children's health. Effective daily routines ensure children understand the need for good personal hygiene. For instance, children automatically wash their hands before they eat their snacks and after visiting the toilet.

All staff hold a current first aid certificate which enables children to be given appropriate care if there is an accident. However, accident records are not always being consistently signed by parents to acknowledge that they have been informed, that their child has sustained an injury while attending the setting. This does not help to establish continuity of care for children.

Parents give prior written consent to administer medication, which ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. The group operate an effective sick child procedure which includes the procedure for reporting communicable diseases, and exclusion periods. This information is freely available to parents which enables both the parent and the provider to work together to support children's health.

Nutritious snacks which includes a daily selection of fresh fruit donated by the parents, helps children develop healthy eating habits from a young age. Topics such as tasting a variety of raw and cooked vegetables, and tasting and examining the seeds and pips from a wide variety of fresh fruits, enable children to learn about foods that are good for them in meaningful ways. Children are able to independently help themselves to their own water bottles. This encourages children to think about their personal needs.

Opportunities for children to be active, learn control of their bodies, and develop their physical skills are good. Children have great fun chasing staff around the outdoor play area while playing tickling games, which gives them good opportunities to take part in vigorous exercise. Children are competent when climbing the slides and enjoy crawling through the play tunnel. Further equipment such as a trampoline and a variety of balancing equipment, help young children to develop their co-ordination and aid their overall physical development. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They are competent in using a variety of tools and equipment such as rolling pins, cutters, and fine paint brushes during their play.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a bright and child-friendly environment where displays of children's work and appropriate posters add to the welcoming environment. Children benefit from playing in a well-organised environment which has well defined designated areas. For example, children move freely between the two rooms. One of the rooms has a variety of natural and creative resources, in addition to a computer area. The main hall has designated areas for block play and constructional play, along with the role play and book area. This enables staff to offer children a broad and balanced range of activities to aid their overall learning and development.

Children use a wide range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. Equipment and resources are stored at low levels, to enable children to self-select their own choice of toys and equipment. For instance, one child selects some cars

to play with while another child selects some scissors to cut some paper. This enables young children to make important choices during their play, and spend time concentrating at self-chosen activities.

Risk assessments and a daily safety check completed by staff, help to minimise hazards and ensures children's safety. Appropriate daily routines enable children to begin to understand how to keep themselves safe. For instance, children all hold onto a very long toy snake which enables them to stay together in a line, while walking to the outdoor play area. Staff use gentle reminders during their play to help children learn about safety rules within the setting. For example, staff remind children about the dangers of throwing small balls inside the premises, and explain why they must not throw the sand when playing in the outdoor area. Visits from outside agencies help young children learn about keeping safe while travelling in a car in meaningful ways.

Staff have an appropriate understanding of child protection which means they are alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse. However, the setting does not have a procedure if an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer. The manager and staff are also not aware of the correct procedure to follow if this does arise. Consequently, this presents a risk of children and families not receiving swift and necessary support from appropriate outside agencies.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy when they arrive at the setting and quickly immerse themselves in play. Staff warmly greet the children and they readily seek support from staff, which indicates that trusting relationships have been formed. For example, the manager joins the story time and two children quickly rush to sit on her lap while another adult sits and reads the story. This enables them to make satisfactory progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Staff encourage children to talk about important events in their life such as recent holidays and their new baby brothers and sisters. Children are able to see photographs of themselves within the setting which enables children to develop a sense of belonging.

Children are becoming competent in taking care of their own personal needs. For example, they are able to wash their hands independently after they use the toilet, and after painting. They are encouraged to put on their own painting aprons and make good attempts to find their name cards during snack time. This helps children to become independent and helps them develop positive self-esteem. Children are involved in a broad range of planned activities, and there is a good balance of adult and child initiated activities.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. They are encouraged by staff who are very caring and have sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Planned activities are helping children to become focused and persist at an activity for some time. There are ample opportunities for children to go back to an activity which enables them to practise and refine their skills. This helps young children consolidate their learning. Teaching is flexible and enables staff to fully utilise spontaneous events while incorporating the key areas of learning. However, parents are not given appropriate opportunities to contribute to an initial assessment of their child on entry to the pre-school. Consequently, this does not enable staff

to build on what children already know so that familiar interests can be used as a starting point for care and learning.

Staff generally talk to children to help them connect ideas, and encourage them to explain what is happening during certain activities to help them think. Written plans are linked to the six areas of learning and make clear what children are expected to learn. Regular evaluation of activities is recorded to demonstrate that learning intentions have been successful. Staff observe children during free, and focused activities, and use notes to assess children's achievements. This helps to identify children's stages of learning, and allows staff to plan the next step in children's learning and development. However, although staff are recording some information on the next step in children's learning, there is no evidence to demonstrate how, and when this is going to be achieved. For instance, by including appropriate activities or one-to-one work in the programme for the following week or topic to ensure children are moved on in their learning at a good pace.

Children work well independently and generally co-operate when working as a group. For instance, they are encouraged to take turns in playing with a fishing game and are learning to wait their turn on the computer. Children speak confidently to peers and adults during their play and their spoken language is developing well. They listen avidly to stories and are able to recall key phrases, as well as using hand actions to demonstrate 'under', 'over' and 'through'. Children are given appropriate opportunities to increase their awareness of different purposes of writing in meaningful ways such as writing a shopping list. Clapping games and sound games help children distinguish one sound from another.

Children count everyday objects confidently. They count the pile of raisins during snack time, and count the eyes on the toy snake and legs on the spider they have painted. Children are able to recognise numbers that are important to them such as their age, and talk confidently about the 'triangle' and 'rectangle' shapes they recognise when playing with the play equipment. Children learn about size, pattern, and use appropriate maths language through practical worthwhile activities which are linked to the stepping stones. Staff encourage children to develop simple calculation skills, when they talk to the children about how many triangles of sandwiches they have left during lunch time.

Children are becoming very competent in using information and technology equipment. They are using good mouse control when playing games on the computer. Relevant topics which enable them to recognise photographs of themselves as babies, enable children to find out about past and present events. Further opportunities are needed to help children learn about the local environment.

Children have many opportunities to use their senses and explore a varied range of materials both natural, and manufactured. They are encouraged to describe the feel of the shells in the sand, and talk about the sound of the sea when they place the shells to their ears. They explore the warm and freshly made play dough in their hands, and taste different types of fruits. Children enjoy singing sessions and have built up a good repertoire of songs and action rhymes. They express themselves creatively through using a range of mediums when they paint, draw and make collages that represent their experiences.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff encourage all the children to participate in all of the activities provided, to ensure children have equal opportunities to maximise their enjoyment and potential. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Planned activities help children to understand and appreciate other cultures, which helps children to develop a positive attitudes towards diversity. Children are developing warm and caring relationships with each other, and they are learning important social skills such as sharing, and taking turns.

Settling-in routines for children and families who speak English as an additional language, is not always enabling a smooth transition from home to pre-school. This is due to the lack of relevant information. For example, children's registration forms do not contain relevant information to assist staff in identifying children's first spoken language. Consequently, this does not enable staff to use appropriate strategies so that they are able to understand children's basic requests, and subsequently support these children's language and communication needs more effectively.

There are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This means that staff are able to adapt activities, to ensure they can experience a range of stimulating activities appropriate to their level of ability. Staff make expectations clear, and give clear reasons for requests which help children understand why certain behaviour is not acceptable. Consequently, children's behaviour is generally good, and they play well together. Children are showing consideration towards each other, and readily offer each other their toys and resources without adult guidance. They recognise special events in other children's lives and congratulate them on their birthdays.

Partnership with parents and carers who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents, and parents speak warmly of staff's welcoming approach. Parents provide appropriate and relevant information about their child's medical and dietary needs, and are asked to read the settings policies and procedures when their child first starts to attend the group. This enables parents to make an informed choice.

Parents can request to view their child's progress records, and can speak to staff informally about their child's achievements. However, there are no formal systems in place to ensure parents are kept informed of children's ongoing progress and development. Parents are not given sufficient information about the Foundation Stage to help them understand how funded children should be working towards the early learning goals. Consequently, this does not ensure parents understand that play, has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning. Staff are not actively involving parents in their child's learning, because they do not give them sufficient suggestions regarding activities that can extend learning at home. Consequently, this lack of sharing appropriate information between staff and parents does not enhance children's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by qualified and caring staff who have sound knowledge and understanding of child development. This enables staff to meet children's needs appropriately. Staff deployment ensures children are adequately supervised during the day to

ensure their safety. Staff understand their role and responsibility and work well as a team due to a clearly defined staff rota. The day is well planned allowing children time for quiet and active play. All the children receive appropriate support from staff who enjoy their company, which helps children feel secure and confident. Management actively encourage staff to undertake relevant core training, which supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Information kept about children is relevant and generally helps to meet their care needs. The provider is not ensuring that all mandatory procedures are being kept at the premises, to ensure the manager is fully aware of operational procedures. Consequently, this does not guarantee the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. Appropriate recruitment procedures are in place. However, management have not put in place robust procedures to ensure that staff are made fully aware of the disqualification schedule, to ensure they remain suitable to care for children.

Leadership and management of the pre-school is satisfactory. Staff are supported by management through regular meetings where they discuss their ideas for planning. However, responsibility for focused activities is not being sufficiently delegated, to ensure the continued professional development of all the staff. Consequently, teaching strategies do not always remain consistent to offer the more able children sufficient challenges. The manager has shown a good commitment towards wanting to improve the overall service by working closely with other professional agencies. She has put in place appropriate strategies to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education.

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

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to improve their operational procedures in respect of monitoring staff checks, accident recording and access to the provision from visitors. They were also asked to improve their risk assessment, and develop staff's knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedure. The provider has now put in place appropriate procedures to ensure that all appropriate vetting procedures for staff are now being undertaken.

The amount of visitors to the setting is now restricted, and all large play equipment is appropriately secured. All staff have now attended appropriate child protection training. This enables the provider to promote positive outcomes for children's safety and welfare. Although the provider has implemented additional procedures for the recording of accidents, this still needs to be developed further to ensure parents are consistently signing the accident record.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to develop procedures to improve staff deployment. The provider has now introduced a room plan and staff rota to ensure staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. This enables staff to work more effectively as a team.

### **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 the 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):

- ensure the child protection statement includes a procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer
- improve systems to support children and families who speak English as an additional language
- ensure all mandatory policies are kept at the premises to enable the manager to be kept fully aware of all operational procedures
- develop appropriate systems to ensure the ongoing suitability of staff, and improve systems for accident recording.

#### 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):

- ensure information from assessments is being used to inform planning and show how identified next steps are going to be achieved
- improve systems for seeking appropriate information about children's attainments on entry to the provision to enable staff to build on what children already know
- develop systems for parents to be informed about their child's ongoing progress and encourage them to become involved in their child's learning at home
- improve systems to promote the professional development of all staff to ensure consistent teaching methods.

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)