

Northlands Park Neighbourhood Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY294263
Inspection date	07 July 2008
Inspector	Janette Elaina Lockwood
Setting Address	Northland Parks Children's Centre, Davenants, Basildon, Essex, SS13 1QX
Telephone number	01268 725616
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Registered person	Pre-School Learning Alliance
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Northlands Park Neighbourhood Nursery is run by the Pre-school Learning Alliance and opened in 2004. It operates from a purpose built single storey building within the grounds of Felmore Primary School in Basildon. Children are cared for in separate home bases appropriate for their ages and stages of development and share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens each weekday from 07.30 until 18.30 all year round and serves families from the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 84 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 41 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 15 members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The setting is very clean and hygienic because staff are committed to following their well written procedures and take high responsibility to minimise the spread of germs. For example, having a strict 'no shoe' policy in the baby room reduces contamination from outside sources. Children themselves have an excellent understanding of healthy practices and can talk confidently about why they need to wear hats and suncream when in the garden.

Children's individual health requirements are taken into consideration and addressed as a high priority in consultation with parents in order to help keep them healthy. If children are ill or have an accident their medical needs are met with high concern and their health and well-being is paramount.

Food is nutritional and hygienically prepared by a qualified chef who uses fresh ingredients and as a result children are very well nourished and eat heartily. Any dietary requirements are given high priority and strictly adhered to with regular discussions with parents. Fresh drinking water is freely available to children so they do not become dehydrated.

Regular outdoor play is part of the daily routine in most weathers so children have plenty of fresh air and exercise. An extensive range of equipment and activities, both indoors and outdoors, ensures their physical development is encouraged. For example, outdoors there is a rope bridge and climbing apparatus to balance on and a very large basket ball net encourages the children to aim and throw a ball with some success. The setting has specialist equipment to enable all children to develop their individual physical skills safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept very safe in the setting because staff implement their policies and procedures and check safety on a daily basis to help minimise any risks to children. The premises are secure with parents and visitors passing through the children's centre reception area and accessing the nursery main door by door bell entry. Parents know they should not let anyone else into the setting by holding the door open, so children's safety is not compromised.

The playrooms are very well resourced and decorated with bright displays and children's work to help make them welcoming. Low-level shelving enables children to choose their activities and small tables and chairs help them to be independent during snack and mealtimes.

The adjacent garden gives children choices in where they wish to play and staff are situated strategically both inside and out to maintain ratios. Staff carry out daily safety checks on the building and garden to ensure they offer safe areas for children to play and safety equipment such as first aid boxes are easily accessed by adults.

Staff practise fire drills with children and there is extra help in an emergency for the baby room, with an evacuation cot used to help transport younger babies outside to the designated point. These measures help to ensure that children are kept safe in an emergency.

All staff have had safeguarding training and know their responsibilities regarding the protection of children. There is a comprehensive procedure in place which is consistent with the Local

Safeguarding Children Board and contact details are available for referral. All staff are properly checked to ensure they are suitable to be with children and there are procedures for managing visitors, students and intruders to help safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff provide excellent care for young children as their individual needs are met extremely well by their key person in addition to the rest of the staff team. Staff liaise regularly with parents to guarantee they are working consistently with them and their interaction with children is extremely good. As a result, children have made close bonds with staff, helping them to settle properly and develop their sense of trust and belonging. Although children are always busy, there is a calm atmosphere in both of the rooms and staff support children very well in their play helping children to build their self-esteem.

Staff have created an exciting and interesting outdoor classroom which is open everyday for children use in a free flow style. A covered area is available for small groups to read books or have stories, for example, and a very wide range of activities take place in the open air such as role play, construction activities and gardening. The outdoor classroom encourages children to feel a sense of freedom as they enjoy their activities in the fresh air.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is extensively used for children under three years to plan and monitor children's progress and this helps staff plan effectively for their next steps. Staff provide innovative activities for children under three including the babies, for example, cornflour and water (gloop), and body painting. They enjoy exploring treasure baskets and joining in action songs and rhymes and staff encourage all children to feel valued by taking part.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Their planning and teaching is based on an excellent understanding of individual children's stages of development and effectively covers all the areas of learning equally well. Planning is very clear, showing staff exactly what needs to be done in order for the activities to be successful and in addition, staff have the skills to know when to be flexible and how to present new experiences and information to children in a way they will understand. The inclusion of all children is carefully monitored and staff expertly challenge and expect the most from them by finding out what children know and identifying what they need to do next to progress.

Relevant observations contribute to the regular assessments that identify children's achievements or difficulties and their progress over time. They are systematic, informative, objective and sufficiently linked to the stepping stones and the early learning goals. The information gathered in assessments is skilfully used to help children move forward to the next stage in their learning.

Children know their key person group which is represented by a colour and sit together for snack time with their key person which helps to reinforce their sense of belonging. They are becoming confident helpers and carry out simple tasks responsibly and take pride in what they do, relishing the praise they receive from staff. They are beginning to hold meaningful conversations with their peers and staff join in when appropriate to extend their language and understanding of phonics. The learning environment is text rich and children have frequent

opportunities to practise their pre-writing skills both inside and outdoors. In addition, books are available both in the outdoor classroom and indoors so children can enjoy them in different situations linked to various activities to begin to understand that text has meaning.

Children use mathematical language during their play and staff support them in their understanding of the importance of numbers in their everyday routines. For example, children are asked how many children can go to the toilet together and why and they work out that as there are four toilets, only four children can go. Incidental teaching is used throughout the day to help children recognise some numerals and to practise simple calculation, for example in songs and rhymes. Children frequently use size and positional language when designing and constructing as well as when looking at nature, for example, comparing the size or shape vegetables they have grown. They also make comparisons about themselves and others, looking at how they have grown and developed over time.

Children develop their finer physical skills through use of small equipment and tools, for example, learning to use their knives and forks confidently. The range of equipment to help their hand-eye coordination and manipulation includes threading activities, using small components to make constructions and using malleable materials. Whilst they play the children use their imaginative skills and talk to each other about what they are making. They frequently use the dressing up clothes in role play often wearing them for most of the session whilst they go about they are playing and learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They show care and concern for one another and are encouraged to be helpful, for example, holding a younger child's hand to accompany them to the snack table, or 'mopping up' when they spill their drink. Children have regular and worthwhile opportunities to talk about their own homes and families and to find out about how others live and are beginning to understand that everyone is different and deserves to be valued. The setting is rich with photographs and posters showing people from different cultures, or with disabilities, in a positive manner.

Staff find out information about individual children so they can meet their needs, for example, whether they have English as an additional language or follow a particular religion or culture. In this way, staff can work with parents to ensure that children's similarities and differences are valued.

The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities effectively. The staff gather specific information from parents and specialists involved with the children to develop individual play and learning plans to help them progress. Children are integrated into the setting as much as possible and specialist equipment is obtained to help them be included in activities with other children. Staff get to know the children very well and liaise regularly with parents and specialists to provide ongoing support so children can reach their potential.

Children's behaviour is exemplary because staff have high expectations of them and foster an atmosphere of respect. Staff follow their comprehensive procedures consistently to model children's behaviour and help them to know what is expected. Children are frequently praised and even the youngest children are given small, helpful tasks to do to build their self-esteem. Furthermore, the calm atmosphere, together with the freedom to play inside or outdoors, has a positive effect on the children's behaviour.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents of children receiving funding receive high quality information about their child's achievements and progress through daily communication in addition to regular parents' evenings where they share their child's records with the key person and can add their written comments. Good quality, clear information is displayed to explain about the Foundation Stage curriculum in relation to different types of play activities so parents are made aware of how their children are learning. In addition, the staff work with parents to support children's learning both at the setting and at home with activities, nursery books and leaflets for parents to take home and read to help their children to learn.

Parents are provided with an abundance of relevant information about the setting, such as policies and procedures relating to the running of the provision. There is an active parent forum where interesting matters are discussed and the minutes of the meetings are displayed for other parents to see. The setting has sought parents' opinions and suggestions through a nursery feedback form which has been evaluated and the results published, in order to ensure parents have some influence over the way the setting runs.

Parents are asked to provide important information about their children so that staff can get to know them well and meet their needs consistently in accordance with their parents' wishes. The setting has procedures in place to enable all parents to access this information including audio tapes, large print documents and a choice of languages.

There is a comprehensive complaints policy available to parents which details the procedures to be followed if there are concerns about the service. This provides contact details for Ofsted if the concern cannot be addressed by the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The management team's vision of the high standard of care and education inspires the work of the setting and influences the quality of teaching by other staff. The setting assesses its own strengths and weaknesses through parental feedback and monitoring and evaluations are used to make improvements to the teaching and learning for children.

The management team and senior staff know what is going on throughout the setting and who is doing a good job, and successful teaching initiatives are shared to improve consistency. The setting effectively monitors the progress children are making towards the early learning goals and continually updates the professional development of staff and teaching initiatives to provide high quality learning experiences for children.

The setting is organised effectively and has robust recruitment and vetting procedures for new staff to help protect children. The manager is suitably qualified and aware of the conditions of registration. She works both in the office as well as making daily visits into the playrooms to monitor practices. Space is generally used very well although at times, there is the potential for more than 26 children to be in a group.

Records, policies and procedures are very clearly kept and regularly reviewed to continue to improve the service and the manager is aware of notifying Ofsted of any changes.

Staff have regular appraisals which are used to identify any training needs and the level of training undertaken is high, directly influencing the excellent levels of care for children. Staff have their own roles and responsibilities and show a positive commitment to the children and a pride in their work. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure children's individual educational needs are met by developing the planning to incorporate differentiation. Children's individual learning styles are now fostered through planning using children's own starting points.

The setting was also asked to review how children are grouped at specific times, for example, story times to ensure their individual needs are met. Children now have small group story times and activities as well as the larger group times so the activities can be pitched at an appropriate level.

The provider agreed to review the provision of large equipment to encourage physical development and this has been addressed by installation and use of apparatus in the garden area which children can access all year round. In addition, large equipment can be used to help children develop their large muscle skills indoors.

Complaints since the last inspection

Concerns were received on 11 April 2005 regarding National Standards 8: Food and drink; 3: Care learning and play and Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents. Ofsted investigated this complaint by carrying out an unannounced visit on 19 April 2005. Inspectors were satisfied that children's needs were being met, and the nursery had taken steps to improve communication with parents. The provision had not, however, recorded all complaints and an action was raised under Standard 12 to maintain a record of all complaints and ensure that this is kept on the premises. A satisfactory response has been received to the actions, and the provider remains qualified for registration.

Concerns were received on 11 April 2007 relating to National Standards 1: Suitable person; 8: Food and drink; 11 Behaviour and 12: Partnership with Parents. Ofsted investigated this complaint by carrying out an unannounced visit to the nursery. Inspectors raised two actions under National Standards 13 and 14 regarding keeping a record of complaints and notifying Ofsted of any significant changes or events. A satisfactory response has been received to the actions, and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- ensure that children are cared for in groups of no more than 26

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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