

Treehouse Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254328
Inspection date	06 December 2007
Inspector	Christine Eglinton
Setting Address	30 Chatham Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 3DN
Telephone number	01603 665740
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Registered person	Treehouse Children and Families Centre
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Treehouse Children's Centre opened in 1986. It operates from a self-contained premises, comprising of a large hall, a small room and a grass and concrete outside area. The centre is situated close to the centre of the city of Norwich. Children attend from a wide catchment area.

The centre is registered for a nursery for 34 children aged from two to five years. It also operates an out of school scheme, with registration for 26 children aged four to eight years, although children up to the age of 14 can be accommodated. There are currently 60 children on roll in the out of school scheme, and 43 children from two to five years on roll within the nursery. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. The centre currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week during school term-times. Sessions are from 08:30 until 13:00. The out of school scheme opens five days a week from 15:00 until 18:00hrs during school term-times. It also operates from 08:30 until 18:00 during the school holidays, with the exception of one week at Christmas and the last two weeks of the summer break.

The centre employs 14 staff. Of these, 10 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a very clean environment where staff follow effective health and hygiene practices, which help to sustain children's good health. For instance, staff clean toys and equipment regularly and wash tables with appropriate anti-bacterial sprays regularly during the day. From an early age children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through effective daily routines. Staff make good use of topics and circle time to help children to become aware of healthy practices. They use discussions and stories to help children understand the importance of cleaning their teeth, and arrange visits from the neighbourhood community health visitor who covers topics about looking after their bodies.

All staff hold a current first aid certificate which enables children to be given good care if there is an accident. Parents give prior written consent to administer medication and staff have clear procedures when administering medication, which ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. The nursery operates an exclusion procedure for infectious illnesses which is issued to all parents when they first attend the setting. There is also additional information displayed on the parents notice board alerting parents to the more serious childhood diseases. This helps to prevent the spread of infectious ailments and contributes towards keeping children healthy.

Children receive a healthy range of snacks which includes a selection of fresh fruit or vegetables. They are learning about healthy foods in meaningful ways. For instance, children have grown a variety of vegetables and herbs and the produce is used during the weekly cookery sessions. Staff gather all relevant information regarding diet and medical history and implement effective procedures during meal times. This ensures children's individual dietary and medical needs are met. Children in the after school club are able to have free access to drinking water without any adult assistance. However, this is not freely accessible for all the children in the inside area of the nursery due to the location of the cups.

Children enjoy regular physical activities that help keep them in good health. They are regularly involved in music and movement sessions which encourages them to move in number of ways. They have great fun running around energetically in the outdoor play area playing imaginative games with staff. Older children in the after school club enjoy playing football games together, and eagerly participate in dancing sessions where they have lots of fun dancing vigorously to different types of music. Large play equipment in the outdoor area gives children good opportunities to practise and develop their physical skills, including balance and co-ordination.

Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They are competent when using a range of small equipment and clearly demonstrate their dexterity when peeling bananas and scooping marbles out of cups with spoons during creative activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and welcoming environment where their creative work is well displayed. This shows children that their work is valued by adults and adds to the child focused environment. Children benefit from playing in a well-organised environment which enables them to move around safely and freely. There is a good balanced range of activities and children have access to a wide selection of toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. Younger children are able to choose a selection of toys and equipment from low level units. A further selection of equipment is clearly labelled which can be requested by children.

Children are well supervised by staff during the sessions and good procedures are in place to promote children's safety. For example, younger children play outside first and then swap with the older children which ensures their safety. Robust systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. This guarantees that children are unable to leave the premise without a suitable adult. Additional systems are in place for the safe collection of older children from school. Security of the premises is good to prevent unwanted visitors gaining access. Risk assessments completed by staff helps to minimise hazards however, these are not always being used effectively in some areas of the outdoor play area. For example, protruding thorns which may pose a risk to children's safety.

Staff use gentle reminders during their play to help children learn about safety rules within the setting. People from the emergency services have visited the setting and have enabled children to become aware of stranger danger and road safety. Staff have sound understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and update their child protection training. This ensures they remain knowledgeable about what action to take, if they have any concerns about a child in their care and can act in the child's best interest.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are warmly greeted by staff when they first arrive and confidently enter the setting and immediately involve themselves in play. Children relate well to staff and confidently approach staff for support during their play. This indicates that trusting relationships have been formed. Activities are carefully planned to ensure there is a good balance of child-initiated and adult led activities. Older children are very keen for staff to join them in the out of school clubs activities. They enjoy playing their favourite card games along with other team games such as football and board games. After school children have great fun dancing energetically to different types of music such as Latin American music. They enjoy meeting their friends in a relaxed and informal environment.

Children take an active role in deciding what they want to play with and all of the children regularly enjoy a good variety of craft and creative activities. For example, some of the nursery children explore different ways of painting with coloured dye to represent the sun. Others explore marble painting and decorating Christmas cards cut in the shape of a cracker. However, occasionally nursery children are not always given sufficient time to go back and repeat creative activities to help them consolidate their learning. After school children enjoy making Christmas tree decorations out of dough. Consequently, all children enjoy these group activities which encourages children's creative development. This also provides important recreational time for

the after school club children enabling them to relax and have complete freedom to pursue their own interests.

Children are encouraged to talk about their home and important people in their lives. Nursery children are able to bring in special items from home which are discussed during circle time. This helps children to develop a sense of belonging within the setting. Children are involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events which support their development and overall learning. New children are helped to settle into the nursery because staff ensure they find out about children's favourite toys and activities. This helps children to have familiar experiences and helps them to settle more easily. Nursery children are very competent in taking care of their own personal needs. For example, they are encouraged to blow their own noses and make good attempts to put on their own coats and aprons. These experiences enable children to develop positive self-esteem.

Teaching and learning is outstanding and highly effective due to staff having a thorough knowledge of the Foundation stage, the stepping stones, and how children learn. This enables them to plan an extensive range of imaginative and innovative practical activities that stimulate children's interest. Plans are comprehensive and contain purposeful activities showing the learning intentions for children across the six areas of learning. Staff have extensive knowledge of children's starting points due to effective use of key worker groups, where they are able to offer children excellent support in small groups. Staff make detailed and systematic observations of children's progress which is then used to plan future activities and the next steps in children's individual learning. This enables children to flourish and make excellent progress in their overall learning and development. The environment is well organised and very good use is made of the outside learning environment. Children's activities are enhanced by the availability of an extensive range of resources which are used imaginatively to capture children's interest.

Children are thoroughly interested and very motivated to learn. They are very confident and tell staff when they want to complete tasks independently. Children are developing good social relationships with each other and are observed to cuddle each other warmly. Staff encourage children to help each other. They suggest that the more capable children help the younger children with practical tasks such as helping them put on their aprons. Staff acknowledge children's achievements with lots of warm praise and encouragement, and children are very keen to show their parents what they have made during the day. This helps to foster children's self-esteem and enables them to become independent and successful learners.

Children speak very confidently to their peers and adults. They are learning to listen to each other when they talk openly during circle time. Children are confident to talk about themselves and their experiences, and express themselves very well using good vocabulary. Staff encourage children to extend their vocabulary by introducing new words during spontaneous events. For example, children become very animated when they discover insects living under logs in the garden and introduce words such as 'centipedes and millipedes'. Planned activities are used to help children become aware of sounds in words. Staff provide children with good opportunities of sharing a range of stories and information books. Children have very good opportunities of using emergent writing in lots of meaningful ways and in a number of situations.

Children use number confidently to count in activities and routines. They understand a good range of mathematical language relating to size and quantity, and count on and back in number rhymes and during focused activities. For example, children enjoy sitting with staff and talk about the planet display and confidently point to the numerals displayed on the space rocket while counting down before their rocket 'blasts off into space'. Children confidently recognise

patterns in every day objects, and concepts of mathematical problem solving and early calculation skills are incorporated into relevant practical activities.

Children have very good opportunities of examining changes through walks in the local environment where they discuss different seasons. Topics enable children to learn about past and present events and they enjoy exploring and investigating using a wide range of resources. Children have excellent opportunities of learning about the local and wider environment because they regularly visit an extensive range of various places of interest. These visits incorporate lots of sensory experiences and involve interactive learning. Children are confident in using information and technology equipment and they demonstrate good mouse control when playing on the computer. They have good access to other resources such as: calculators; binoculars; magnify glasses and franking stamps which are used to enhance their learning.

Children enjoy singing sessions and they have built up a wide repertoire of songs and action rhymes. Role play includes an extensive range of stimulating areas which have included: a space station; igloo; pirate island and flower shop amongst other familiar places for children to explore. This enables children to develop their imagination and helps staff to build on familiar experiences in fun and interesting ways. Children express themselves creatively through a range of mediums. They paint, draw and make collages and models that represent their experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff have a positive attitude towards diversity. They help children become aware of their own, and other cultures through using a wide range of resources, planned activities, and as they discuss and celebrate a very wide variety of cultural festivals. For example, nursery children examine cultural artefacts such as an authentic Chinese dragon mask. Nursery children use globes to locate different countries and compare their play, homes, food and dress. Children in the after school club have great fun dancing to different types of cultural music. This positive approach helps children learn to acknowledge and accept differences by discussing similarities and differences in meaningful ways.

There are excellent systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and /or disabilities. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensure all children's needs are well planned for and met. Management of the setting organise individual adult support for children with learning difficulties. This demonstrates an inclusive approach and means that staff are able to plan for children's individual needs. Therefore, children are able to experience a range of stimulating activities appropriate to their level of ability.

Staff are positive role models and treat all children in a respectful and courteous manner. They manage children's behaviour calmly and patiently which encourages children to respond effectively to any guidance and praise. Nursery children are very aware of social rules and confidently alert staff to children who are not following the agreed social rules of sharing the equipment. After school club children are consulted on the codes of conduct of the club which enables them to be very clear about the agreed boundaries. Nursery children enjoy special rewards of sitting on the 'wiggly worm' seat during story time for sharing and being kind towards each other. Consequently, all the children play well together and show care and consideration towards each other.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding including parents of funded children. Relationships with parents are exceptionally friendly and supportive, and a very large number of parents speak earnestly about staffs welcoming approach. Parents talk about the centre feeling like 'an extension of their own family' and they feel staff treat children with immense concern while respecting their individuality. Parents are asked relevant information about their child when they first attend the setting. This ensures staff are made aware of individual needs and helps them build on what children already know. Parents are given comprehensive information on the setting through the prospectus which includes a copy of the settings previous inspection report.

Regular newsletters contain detailed information on forthcoming topics which include relevant information on the Foundation Stage, and areas of learning. This enables funded parents to continue learning at home. Staff in the nursery make excellent use of daily feedback which keeps parents informed of what their child has achieved during the session. Nursery parents have the opportunity of meeting formally with their child's key worker twice a year to discuss their child's individual progress. Consequently, this approach helps to keep parents fully informed of their child's ongoing individual progress and development, and establishes enables all to work together to support children's care and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by qualified and experienced staff who have sound knowledge and understanding of child development. All policies and procedures are revised annually by the setting which are made known to the staff. This helps to ensure effective management of the setting and contributes to the safety and welfare of children. The setting follows robust recruitment procedures to ensure staff's suitability. Staff work very well as a team due to management using efficient systems which enable them to be aware of their designated responsibilities. This allows staff to provide a stimulating and well-balanced programme. Children are well grouped and the key worker systems ensure good support and care throughout the session.

Staff are encouraged to enrol on relevant courses which supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest, and most relevant information available. Information kept about children is relevant and helps to promote their welfare. All mandatory documentation is in place and stored in a confidential manner. However, although the setting has devised a written complaints policy it does not contain sufficient information in line with regulations. For example, it makes no reference to complainants being notified of the outcome within the specified time scales.

Leadership and management of the nursery is outstanding. The manager has put in place very effective systems which enables staff to be very clear about their roles and responsibilities in developing children's learning. This ensures all the staff work together to help children make very good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are supported by management through regular meetings where they are able to discuss the curriculum together. Management value staff's contributions and delegated responsibilities amongst the staff team, fosters a cohesive approach. The setting's aims are very positive with emphasis on creating a warm and friendly atmosphere with a challenging and stimulating environment. This is being achieved through staff giving children extensive support, and coming together collectively as a group to discuss the aims of the setting.

The manager is forward thinking and has demonstrated this in devising an action plan showing areas of improvement with timescales. Consequently, children's care and learning is enhanced by the effective deployment of staff and clear leadership of the setting. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last integrated inspection the setting was asked to make poisonous plants inaccessible to children, and review the rules and boundaries of behaviour during snack times for the out of school children. The setting has sought horticultural advice and found that the plants growing in the outdoor area are not poisonous which negates them from taking any further action. Children attending the out of school session now sit down to eat during snack time. This ensures that policies and procedures are being used effectively to promote the welfare and care of children attending the setting. There were no significant weaknesses to report for the nursery education inspection.

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.

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The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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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 the risk assessment for the outdoor play area is being consistently followed in respect of cutting back protruding thorns
- make sure activities planned by adults give nursery children sufficient time to repeat creative activities when needed
- continue to develop the complaints procedure.

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