

Otterburn Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY364598
Inspection date	03 July 2008
Inspector	Jayne Utting
Setting Address	Otterburn County First School, Otterburn, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE19 1JF
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Registered person	North Tynies Childcare Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Otterburn Pre-School has been operating since 1994 and was re-registered in December 2007 under North Tynies Childcare Ltd. It is located near the town of Otterburn. The group operates from Otterburn First School and has access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The group is open four days a week during school terms. Sessions run from 09.00 until 11.30 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and from 12.45 until 15.15 on Fridays. Most children who attend live in the local area.

The group cares for a maximum of 24 children aged from two to under five years at any session. Of the 17 children on roll, 16 receive funded nursery education. The group supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also those who speak English as an additional language.

The group is managed by North Tynies Childcare Ltd. There are two permanent staff who work with the children. Both have a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Outdoor play is a central part of the daily routine and a good variety of physical activities is provided for all children. This helps to promote and enhance their physical development. For example, children enjoy running around, searching for hidden frogs and pushing buggies and lawn mowers. Children also have access to a large, secure grassed area in the school grounds. Staff acknowledge the benefits children obtain from frequent access to fresh air and regular exercise to support their physical development. Space is also available in the large school hall when they are unable to access outside. Here children enjoy dancing and moving to music, practising their balancing skills while singing along to a favourite CD. Children are encouraged to make full use of the resources and activities provided and to test their capabilities within a safe and very supportive environment. The well thought out layout of the indoor space further ensures that children are able to rest and be active according to their individual needs.

The group actively promotes healthy eating. Children are offered a range of varied and nutritious snacks which includes lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, and staff actively encourage the children to try different foods. This helps to promote and maintain children's good health, and is reinforced through a variety of healthy eating activities. For example, the children grow tomato plants to take home. Staff talk to children at snack time about which foods are good for them. Parents and staff discuss any specific dietary requirements a child may have whether for religious, cultural or medical reasons and the relevant information is recorded. Children have free access to water throughout the pre-school session and are offered milk to drink at snack time.

Consistent adult support and guidance help children to gain a good understanding of hygiene and become increasingly independent in their personal care, for example, washing their hands before a snack, after messy play and after using the toilet. Staff present as very positive role models for the children and make consistent use of regular routines to support good hygiene practice. This is reinforced with a comprehensive policy regarding health and hygiene procedures.

Staff hold valid first aid certificates and have also completed training in basic food hygiene. This helps safeguard children's welfare. Excellent hygiene standards are maintained by staff, who have a clear understanding of related policies and procedures which are very well implemented. For example, staff ensure that the facilities, resources and equipment used by children are kept clean and in good order through regular checks. This helps maintain a healthy environment for the children. A clear written policy regarding sick children, information on communicable diseases and the effective recording of all accidents and emergency contacts further promote children's health and well-being, positively safeguarding children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a well organised and safe environment. The playroom is made welcoming with displays of children's artwork, giving them ownership of the environment and developing their self-esteem. The indoor and outdoor space is organised very effectively, enabling children to explore and take risks while being supervised. Children use a good range of safe and well maintained toys and equipment suitable to their age and stage of development. Staff support children's play very well. For example, the play dough stimulates children's imagination to make

colourful bugs and birthday cakes. A different selection of activities is set out each day at child height, developing children's independence as they make their own selections.

Children are well protected because the setting has good safety procedures which are understood and effectively implemented by staff. There are effective security systems for entry into the building and both the arrival and collection of the children is well planned. There is an up-to-date record in place of persons with permission to collect children and the parents let staff know if there is someone different collecting the children. Visitors are required to sign in and out of the pre-school, with staff ensuring that they have no unsupervised access to children. Internally, many safety measures have been taken including smoke alarms and socket covers. This, combined with undertaking daily recorded safety checks inside and outside the premises and for outings, ensures any potential hazards to children are minimised. Electrical and fire safety equipment is regularly checked by the school and kept in a safe condition. There are good fire safety procedures in place, with up-to-date records of practice evacuations. Staff help the children learn about keeping themselves safe at pre-school using sensitive reminders, for example, telling them about walking in the pre-school, not throwing sand and taking care not to slip in the bathroom. There is a comprehensive outings policy in place which details effective safety procedures, including maintaining ratios, carrying a mobile phone and contact details, as well as taking other appropriate equipment including drinks, snacks and sun creams as necessary.

Children are well protected by staff who are confident and secure in their knowledge of child protection policies and procedures. Suitable information and a clear written policy are in place, which ensures children's welfare is appropriately protected. The manager has recently undertaken a safeguarding children course.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident, enjoying their time at pre-school. They eagerly participate in the good range of child-centred and adult-led activities and experiences which promote all areas of their development. For example, they make colourful collages, play with play dough, build high towers out of construction materials and race cars around the hall. Children clearly love joining in with action rhymes and they play happily together in the home corner and with the selection of toys and jigsaws available to them. Learning opportunities are maximised with children correctly identifying their names, the date and the weather on the 'apple tree' registration board.

Children begin to show confidence and independence as they select their own activity from those on offer. Staff get down to children's level, join in with their play and use effective open-ended questioning to extend their play further. Staff respond well to children and answer their questions appropriately.

The room is set out effectively to promote children's independence and staff rotate resources to ensure a good variety of opportunities is provided.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are well supported, and are helped to gain confidence in their abilities and build positive relationships through their interactions with staff and their peers. There is opportunity for children to participate in a wide range of new and stimulating experiences and they are encouraged to take an active role in the group. Staff

communicate well with children using clear and simple language, which in turn helps children to learn and develop well.

Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage, early learning goals and the six areas of learning. There is effective planning in place and this is appropriately linked to the stepping stones and is developed in line with the principles of the Foundation Stage. Key workers monitor and observe children as they participate in activities and use this to inform future activities, ensuring they are sensitive to the differing needs of each child. The room is well organised and set out, ensuring children have effective learning experiences as well as lots of fun. Staff use effective teaching methods and tools, for example, the organisation of the play areas reflect the areas of learning, there are lovely displays of children's work on the walls and children are asked open-ended questions to extend their learning experience appropriately. Staff prepare well for the sessions and achieve a good balance between planned activity and additional free play. Staff manage children effectively, valuing their contributions and adapting activities to ensure that all children are able to participate. Children's achievements are well recorded.

Children have an extremely positive attitude to activities and are eager to take part. They have clearly formed close relationships with the staff, are self-assured and have high self-esteem. For example, they speak confidently within the group, are happy to approach visitors and ask questions, relate well to their friends and play together happily. Children are kind and share well, talking together about how important it is to share. All children help to tidy up when asked by staff, they know where things go and successfully put toys away. Children show developing independence and are able to put on their coats before going home. There is lots of discussion about past events and the children happily share stories about past holidays as they anticipate the summer break.

Children's communication skills are developing well. They show good speaking and listening skills, for example, as they take turns to speak about items they have brought in for the interest box. Children are able to express themselves clearly and have an extensive vocabulary, talking about holidays, their pets and what they enjoy doing. Children practise early writing skills as they hold pencils correctly and practise drawing lines at the writing table. There is limited use made of labelling which impacts on children's developing ability to recognise numbers and letters. Whilst children take some interest in the books available, these are currently kept in a box and, as a result, are not readily accessible to them.

Staff encourage children to recognise shapes, use numbers and count in everyday play. For example, children confidently count the number of children in class that day, and correctly call out the number of dots on the giant dice as they roll them across the floor. They are beginning to identify written numbers, such as those on the computer and programmable toys. They also show a growing awareness of concepts such as addition and subtraction by using a range of resources, for example cutting fruit into sections to learn about simple fractions such as half and quarter. Children can identify which group of items has more or less and confidently use simple mathematical language, such as small, smallest, big and biggest when playing with a sorting game.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, they thoroughly enjoyed a recent topic on bugs, and took great delight in looking at the web that a spider had spun in their specially designed insect frame. Lots of opportunities are provided for children to learn about the living world and they have grown their own tomato plants to take home. This helps children to develop an understanding of how things grow as well as the need to care for living things by making sure their plants are watered.

Children learn about modern technology as well as the natural world. They are enthusiastic as they carefully play on the computer. Children also have access to a range of programmable toys.

Children have lots of opportunity to use large physical equipment and to manipulate small tools freely. For example, they play on the slide, crawl through tunnels, run around outside and push lawnmowers. They use rolling pins, glue spreaders, pencils and crayons successfully. Children are also able to express themselves freely and creatively through a very good range of media and activities, such as paint, collage, sand, model making, dough, music and movement. They are encouraged to clap the sound of their names, which introduces them to the concept of rhythm and beat. All children are well supported and well challenged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff's positive attitude towards equal opportunities and respecting individual and differing needs, as they lead by example. Appropriate role modelling helps children to celebrate diversity and develop a positive view of the wider world. This is complemented by an appropriate range of resources that reflects images of ethnicity, disability and other cultures. There is a comprehensive equal opportunities policy in place and children are cared for as individuals whose similarities and differences are acknowledged and celebrated. It has been some time since staff have attended training on equal opportunities and diversity and this is recognised this as an area for ongoing development. Where appropriate, staff aim to ensure that activities within the group reflect the culture and background of all children who attend.

Staff work hard to ensure that the individual needs of all children are met and that they are cared for in a consistent and appropriate manner, collecting good comprehensive information from parents in order to achieve this.

Staff are positive, calm and competent role models. They sensitively support, praise and encourage all children, promoting their self-esteem, confidence and sense of belonging. Children are very polite, well behaved and enthusiastic to take part in all aspects of pre-school life. Children listen to and respect staff and appropriate supervision ensures that even the youngest children are beginning to learn right from wrong and how to share and be kind to one another. Good behaviour is reinforced through praise, and positive, age-appropriate methods of behaviour management are used when necessary. This approach ensures children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The pre-school is positive in its approach to children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Key staff take responsibility, have attended relevant training and are proactive in ensuring appropriate action is taken when a child is identified as having a learning difficulty or disability. Staff maintain close links with parents and relevant professionals, which ensures the children's overall needs are well met. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of individual children and are committed to working with parents and relevant outside agencies so that specific care and education are provided for all children.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from a two-way sharing of information between staff and parents, which enhances their learning. Parents are requested to supply very detailed information about their children's developmental abilities to enable staff to make a baseline assessment. Parents are verbally informed about their child's progress

on a daily basis and have access to their child's development file. This is supplemented by two parents evenings each year. Parents receive a suitable prospectus which clearly sets out the group's aims and makes reference to policies and the educational provision. A noticeboard keeps parents updated about the general aspects of the provision. Parents are pleased with the pre-school and find the staff approachable and supportive. They feel that they are well informed about their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for and feel at home in a well organised setting that keeps them safe and secure. The walls are filled with beautiful examples of children's work, a reflection of how their contributions are valued and self-esteem promoted.

Children benefit from the support of well qualified staff who are committed to attending relevant training courses to enhance their ongoing personal development. The group has a comprehensive collection of policies and procedures in place. These are understood by all staff, updated regularly and shared with parents. All relevant records are in place, easily accessible and up-to-date, ensuring individual care is provided. Documentation is well organised and confidentiality maintained. Positive links with parents ensure they are kept up-to-date about their child's learning and progress.

Staff to child ratios are good and staff use their time and the space in the pre-school well which ensures that children are able to make best use of the facilities available to them, thereby promoting their ongoing development.

Leadership and management are good. The manager is totally committed to the staff and children and has a clear vision for the setting. All staff are motivated and work very well together and day-to-day management is good. The educational planning and assessment systems are highly effective and aim to meet the individual needs of the children. Committed to improvement, the manager has identified areas for further development, including updating equality and diversity training. Effective recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure children are well protected, and good induction systems and regular staff planning meetings are established. Staff are well supported and given clear direction.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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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):

- continue to develop knowledge through attendance at training, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.

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):

- develop the labelling of resources to further facilitate word and letter recognition and children's ability to self-select (also applies to care)
- ensure books are well presented so as to further encourage children to access them independently (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