



The Cedars Neighbourhood Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY282638
Inspection date 08 December 2005
Inspector Anne Legge

Setting Address Northbrook Close, Beacon Heath, Exeter, EX4 8LZ

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Registered person NCH

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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Cedars Neighbourhood Nursery is part of Surestart, Exeter. It is a community project, led by the National Children's Home charity. It is situated in its own premises, in the Beacon Heath area of Exeter. It has been registered since 2004 and provides care for up to 36 children under 5 years of age. There are currently 50 children on roll, including 5 funded 3- and 4-year-olds. Children with special needs or with English as an additional language are welcomed and supported.

The nursery is open 51 weeks of the year, from 07:30 to 18:00 on weekdays. It is managed by a qualified early years teacher. There are 10 additional staff working with the children, all of whom have appropriate child care qualifications. There is also a modern apprentice and 2 students. Children are cared for on the ground floor, using two interconnecting playrooms and an additional separate playroom. There is another playroom upstairs, for the older children. The nursery kitchen and children's toilets are on the ground floor, and staff and office facilities are on the first floor. The playrooms open directly onto an enclosed outdoor play area.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is extremely well promoted by the provision of an excellent range of nutritious meals and snacks. Children are offered fruit for their snacks, and regular, healthy meals, including plenty of vegetables and dishes which are freshly prepared by the cook. All dietary needs are known and thoughtfully met, as the cook adapts meals to suit children's special dietary requirements, or their parents' preferences. Children have constant access to drinking water, from a cooler. Children enjoy an excellent variety of physical activities, which promote fitness and help to develop their skills. They play in the garden, running, using wheeled toys, or practising their ball control skills. Indoors, they dance to music, ride wheeled toys, or play in a ball pool.

Children are exceptionally well protected from infection, due to the nursery's excellent procedures for ensuring that all areas are clean and that all aspects of their practice are hygienic. Staff know their duties in relation to cleaning, and are rigorous in, for example, spraying nappy changing mats after each use, wearing gloves and aprons when necessary, and using the correct cloths. Children learn good hygiene routines regarding hand washing, and are very independent in their use of washing facilities and paper towels.

Children receive excellent care when they are unwell or injured. Almost all staff have current first aid qualifications, and there are very good systems for recording and sharing information about accidents and medication administered. All the required consents are in place, to enable children to receive medical attention in emergencies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in safe and secure premises, where space is organised thoughtfully, to provide an excellent variety of play experiences. The nursery offers an extremely attractive environment for children, with excellent resources and bright, interesting displays. Children move around freely and safely, choosing from a wide range of toys and resources, which they access safely and easily. Children are secure in the premises, due to effective systems for monitoring access and for ensuring that only authorised adults collect them.

There are effective systems for regularly risk assessing all areas of the nursery, and for checking toys for cleanliness or damage, to ensure that children are safe. Children are protected in emergencies, as they regularly practise evacuation procedures, and all fire safety equipment is tested regularly. They learn to recognise hazards for themselves, as staff warn them, for example, about slippery floors, or throwing heavy objects. They are safe from abuse or neglect, as staff have a good understanding of all child protection issues and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy an outstanding variety of activities, which are carefully planned to meet their needs and interests, and to promote their development in all areas. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Birth to Three Matters framework, and use this very effectively to plan for the development of young children. They provide an extensive range of activities, which engage children of all ages. Children choose to play in any of the four areas within the main nursery, taking part in an excellent range of creative, imaginative, physical or small world activities. Staff record their progress and plan carefully for the next steps in their development. Children play with ample, high quality resources, including many natural resources, such as shells, cones and wooden toys.

Babies and toddlers are very well stimulated, as they experience different textures and materials, using all of their senses. Their sense of self is extremely well developed, as they see photographs of themselves and their families, carefully displayed around the walls and floor. They learn to communicate, as staff interact skilfully with them and encourage them to respond. They become creative, through an excellent variety of sensory activities, such as playing with pasta or soap bubbles, and in small world and role play. They develop a love of books, from an early age, as they use the well-resourced book areas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are enthusiastic learners and they enjoy the wide variety of activities provided for them. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and use questions and discussion effectively, to promote children's language development and skills. They plan an extensive range of activities, which cover all areas of learning, and which are based on children's interests and needs. They observe children's achievements and record progress in attractive folders, complete with photographs and comments. However, assessment records are being revised, as they do not yet show clearly how children are making progress towards the early learning goals. This sometimes leads to inconsistent challenges for the most able children, especially in mathematics and physical development.

Overall, children make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. They concentrate very well at their chosen tasks and become very independent, such as when deciding which resources are needed to make a book. They develop their understanding of letter sounds, as they discuss the letters in their name. They recognise and begin to

write their names in daily routines, such as naming their pictures. They love books and enjoy sharing stories, and they write for different purposes, such as when sending letters from the post office. Children count in a variety of daily tasks, such as counting pieces in a puzzle. Able children sometimes have opportunities to extend their understanding of number patterns, by combining groups. They recognise shapes and use mathematical language in their play, such as when comparing quantities of water or sand.

Children develop a good sense of time and place, as they talk with staff about family events, or go for walks in the local area. They explore a very good variety of substances and materials, such as dough, pasta, soap or cornflour. They construct with different media and solve problems, such as how to move water from one place to another. They become very imaginative in their role play and small world play, and they develop their creativity through an extensive range of art and craft activities, such as painting, drawing and collage. They gain very good control of small equipment, such as pens and scissors, and they become skilful in their use of large equipment, such as wheeled toys. Able children do not yet have access to large, challenging equipment, although plans for the garden include this provision.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The nursery's excellent ethos of caring for individual children and their families ensures that children's needs are very effectively known and met. They learn to value differences, as staff successfully support those who have English as an additional language, using key words from the home language. Children enjoy using very good resources, such as dolls, books and puzzles, which reflect positive images of diversity. They benefit from the staff's flexible approach to planning, which is linked to children's personal interests and needs. Children with special needs are exceptionally well supported, due to excellent systems for monitoring their progress and working with parents and other professionals.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They learn to respect each other's needs, as staff teach them to share resources. They express wonder, as they enjoy new experiences, such as when babies squeal with delight when they see and feel bubbles. Children behave well and successfully learn to manage their own behaviour, and that of others. For example, they learn to say 'No thank you', when other children behave inappropriately towards them. They enjoy the copious praise of staff, who are positive, warm and consistent in their management of behaviour.

Children enjoy exceptionally consistent care, due to the very close working relationships which staff develop with their parents. There are excellent induction procedures, including home visits by key workers and the sharing of information and family photographs, for the child's Celebration Book. Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff display their plans and constantly involve parents in updating records of children's achievements. They do not yet share targets for learning, or clear records of funded children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the consistent care of a very experienced and well-qualified staff team. Staff are committed to developing their skills and to constantly improving the quality of provision. They are very reflective in their practice, and constantly monitor quality and make improvements, which enhance children's learning and development. Children enjoy playing in a safe and very attractive environment, where time, space and resources are used extremely effectively, to meet their needs.

Leadership and management are good. There are effective systems for monitoring the quality of nursery education, including regular staff appraisals and supervision sessions by the manager. Staff are aware of the strengths of provision, and of areas which need to be developed, and have sought help from other professionals, such as to improve planning and assessment systems.

Children's care and welfare is underpinned by mainly comprehensive documentation, although some policies are not fully up-to-date. The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

A complaint was notified to Ofsted in December 2004, relating to the suitability of a member of staff.

This relates to National Standard 1: Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. The matter was investigated fully and appropriately by the nursery and other agencies. The National Standards were found to be met, and no further action was taken.

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.

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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):

- make sure that children's care is underpinned by up-to-date policies and procedures.

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):

- continue to develop systems for planning and assessment, so that children's progress towards the early learning goals is systematically tracked, and the most able children are consistently challenged
- continue to develop systems for sharing with parents information about their child's progress towards the early learning goals, so that they can fully support learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk