



Start Point Northam

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131570
Inspection date	14 March 2006
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Registered person	Southampton City Council
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 outstanding. 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?

Start Point Northam has been registered since 2000. It is a maintained nursery run by the Local Education Authority. The nursery offers sessional care for children from 3 to under 5 years. It is managed by the teacher-in-charge and is part of the Start Point project. It is located on the Northam housing estate in the inner city of Southampton. It is accessed by children both within and outside the local community. The setting operates from its own rooms alongside Northam Community Centre. There is ramped

access to the premises and an enclosed outside play area and a disabled access toilet is available.

Start Point Northam is registered to accept 24 children under 5 years at each session. It has a policy of accepting children from the half-term after their third birthday. All of the 49 children on roll, are funded 3 and 4 year olds. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, term time only from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.40 to 15.10. Children are encouraged to attend 5 sessions a week. The nursery supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 5 members of staff employed to work with the children. The manager is a qualified early years teacher. All other staff hold level 3 qualifications in childcare and most hold current first aid certificates. The setting receives support from a teacher mentor and the Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal care. They independently access the toilet and washing facilities. They learn that washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet helps keep them healthy. Children are aware of the need to wear coats to keep warm and dry. Practitioners follow effective hygiene procedures to prevent cross infection including wearing gloves when changing nappies and using individual towels after hand washing. Practitioners maintain good records of accidents and any medication administered, and share these with parents and carers. They consult with parents about the children's health needs and keep appropriate records on site.

Children enjoy a good range of healthy snacks and drinks which contribute to their good health and growth. These include various fresh fruits, pancakes and toast. Children also experience foods from different countries. These are introduced as part of topics or to link with religious festivals. Children are actively involved in the preparation of some snacks as they mix the batter and then cook pancakes. Children access drinking water independently when needed. Registration forms are completed for children that include information regarding any allergies and dietary needs they may have.

Children take part in a wide variety of activities which contribute to their good health and physical development. They develop a good sense of space, while practising safe movement, exploration, balance, and control. The stimulating outdoor environment provides areas to sit and relax and listen to the wind chimes as well as space to bounce around on hoppers. They access a good selection of equipment which enables them to practice skills such as, climbing, peddling and using balls. Due to the vigilance and skill of staff children move confidently and imaginatively, often taking risks in order to learn new skills. For example, two children on the see-saw

excitedly test how far they can rock without tipping over, whilst being closely supervised. Children benefit from the fresh air and exercise as they use the outdoor area no matter what the weather. Children happily put on the rain coats to keep dry, provided by staff enabling them to continue playing outside when it starts to rain. Indoors, children have further opportunities to develop physical skills when negotiating the stairs to reach the "loft" on the first level or crawling through the tunnel on the ground level of the large home corner apparatus. Children learn that exercise affects their bodies as they become tired and puffed as they use the hand pump to inflate play equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure, warm and welcoming environment. Practitioners give high priority to ensuring their safety. Children and staff are involved in regular fire drills that are recorded appropriately and risk assessments are conducted regularly. Access to the setting via the front door is well monitored and all visitors sign in at reception. There are clear procedures for the safe collection of children and parents are well informed of this. They know they need to inform staff in advance if they wish someone else to collect their child. Children learn to move around the environment safely. This is done through gentle reminders to walk indoors from staff who draw children's attention to the safety posters displayed around the room. On outings, children are protected from harm as they are closely supervised and wear aluminous tabards.

The secure, child friendly garden is an extension of the learning environment. Indoor and outdoor space is organised effectively and creatively allowing children to move around safely providing areas for different activities. These include a climbing area with a safety surface and a sensory garden outside and inside, a play house on two levels. Areas for water, sand, creative activities, building and an office are available at all times. Play equipment is clean and in a good, safe condition. Most is stored in boxes and units at child height allowing children to make independent choices. These are clearly labelled, mostly with pictures and words to enable children to make choices and put things away.

Children are well protected regarding child protection issues as practitioners are suitably trained and they are clear about their roles and the setting's procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and excited as they arrive at the nursery. The vibrant learning environment and the extensive range of activities provided by practitioners ensure children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are keen to take part in the wide and stimulating range of activities of which some are planned but many are spontaneous. For example, a box of space hoppers are delivered and the children are involved in inflating them using a hand pump. They enjoy the

structure of the session that allows them to move around freely selecting the activities they wish to take part in. They equally enjoy the planned, adult led group times which allow for more directed learning opportunities.

Children are secure and settled and able to form positive and caring relationships with each other and the staff. They are comfortable with the routine and know what will happen next. This enables them to plan what they are going to do and to make more choices. For example, after tidy up time children either go outdoors to play or have snack. They have high self-esteem enabling them to express themselves well. Key workers know the children and their families well. This ensures their needs are met well including those with special needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress in their learning. They are highly motivated by the excellent range of stimulating resources and activities provided. They confidently select from the equipment, which supports their learning across all areas. Children are supported by skilled practitioners who extend their learning using positive teaching and questioning. There is a good balance of adult and child initiated activities. Children are grouped appropriately to support them in their learning.

Practitioners know each child well and make regular, accurate assessments of their development and achievements and the curriculum planning covers all areas of learning. These generally ensure each child is provided with challenges. However, there are a few more able children that are not always being challenged sufficiently to move them on to reach their full potential.

Children are confident speakers and converse easily with adults and each other. Children enjoy story time and explore the books that are available in many areas of the playroom. They use language to organise their role play and to express their ideas. Children practise pencil control in the office and role play areas. Most children are beginning to recognise their name as they self-register. Some children recognise and write letters. Children are encouraged to write their names on their art and creative work.

Many children count well, some up to ten. At the dough table, children count the candles they put in birthday cakes they make. The practitioner counts with those that need help and encourages those able to count them independently. They take part in activities to explore shape, size, volume and weight. Children learn about calculating in everyday situations and by skilful questioning of staff. For example, when counting children for the snack table a practitioner asks, "how many more do we need?"

Children explore and investigate with a range of materials and resources. They have access to paint, make dough and use the soil in the garden to make mud pies. Children know their colours.

Many children are confident when using IT equipment and complete simple programmes on the computer. They develop skills using the tracker ball and touch screen. Children learn about the natural world through watching and handling the

giant land snails kept in the setting. They are mesmerised by the fish, both tropical and cold water tanks.

They relish their role play opportunities in both in and outdoors. For example, when pretending to take a dog for a walk and when cooking the dinner. Staff provide excellent opportunities and resources for children to explore their own thoughts and ideas. They encourage children's imaginative play very well. A practitioner asks, "what can you see?" as a child looks out from the loft area. Children listen to a range of music at tidy up times; they enjoy singing and have free access to explore instruments. Children have easy access to a wide range of tools and materials, this allows them to develop good hand-eye coordination and small muscles.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are fully included in the life of the setting, for example they help to tidy up, mop the floor around the water trough, and clear away their plates and cups after snack. Practitioners give high priority to developing children's self-esteem and confidence. They do this by offering many opportunities for children to express themselves and to achieve. For example, at circle time children sing a song about feelings. They are selected in turn to describe how they feel which the child does using their thumbs up or down to help them. Children are encouraged to make choices and plan their time at the setting. Most children do this confidently by explaining to staff what they would like to do. Children finding this more difficult, such as those with special needs or with English as an additional language, are well supported by practitioners to make selections. They do this by showing them photographs of the various areas and activities available, and the child points to what they want to do.

Children are well behaved. They learn to discuss and negotiate with others to solve problems through the expert intervention of practitioners. Therefore children co-operate with each other and learn to share and take turns. Practitioners value all children, set clear boundaries and ensure that their individual needs are well met. Practitioners are good role models for children as they are calm and polite. They promote good behaviour by using positive techniques such as praising and encouraging children at every opportunity. Music is played to indicate tidy up time which children enthusiastically join in with. They are comfortable knowing the routine of the session.

Children with special needs are supported exceptionally well as practitioners are committed to ensuring all children are included in the life of the setting. Individual education plans are devised for those who need them and trained staff and a qualified special educational needs co-ordinator, SENCO, works with children and their families providing excellent support for them. Children develop skills in all areas under the guidance of practitioners who work closely with parents and other professionals when needed. Some children only attend for part of the session if that is what they can manage and to meet their individual need. Practitioners have made books of photographs of people and places in the setting for some children to

encourage their speech and language development. These are taken home to share with parents.

Children have numerous opportunities to learn about themselves, their environment and the world around them. They talk confidently about their friends and families and learn about people in other countries through planned activities and by using a wide range of resources. These include cooking and tasting different foods, using multi cultural dressing up clothes and celebrating various religious festivals. There are numerous books and posters that promote positive images of all people in society including those with disabilities. Some have dual language print. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children make visits to the local community. They take a bus ride to the library for story time and to the shops for the ingredients for cooking pizzas. Parents are invited on some outings. Visitors are invited, including a "farm in a van".

The partnership with parents is outstanding. They are provided with good quality information about the setting and it's provision. Practitioners consider the needs of all parents, including those with English as an additional language to ensure they understand. Concise information regarding the Foundation Stage and how children progress through the stepping stones is in each child's record of achievement. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress as this is shared with parents regularly and through the many opportunities to meet key workers for discussion and newsletters. They know the routine of the day and the planned activities their children have taken part in as this information is displayed on parent boards. This stimulates interest in their child's learning.

Parents find staff approachable and feel able to discuss any issues which may arise. They are welcomed into the nursery and form good relationships with staff. Practitioners make home visits to meet with new children and their families. Both practitioners and parents feel this is invaluable in sharing and recording information about the starting points for children's care and learning. This on-going communication is encouraged as parents and children are regularly invited to contribute to the child's records. Parents complete evaluation forms and children's opinions are sought also regarding what they like at the nursery. Parents are fully encouraged to be involved with their child's learning including those with special needs. They contribute to records, are invited into the setting, and share books from the setting's lending library. Parents are invited on some outings. The last being to an otter and owl centre. The nursery have adopted an owl and parents collect coins in an owl money box to support it. Children enjoy putting pennies in the slot as the parent recounts the outing and the animals they saw.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are very settled and happy in the harmonious nursery environment. The organisation of both their care and education ensures that they are well protected and making sound progress in their learning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The premises are extremely well organised, allowing children to initiate and develop their own play and learning. Planning, monitoring and skilful management, ensures that the wide range of policies and procedures are consistently and effectively applied.

Children benefit from the high ratio of staff who are well qualified and enthusiastic. They keep very good records providing children with excellent continuity of care. Children feel settled and secure and that their individual needs are extremely well met. Staff are well deployed to ensure they can support children's care and learning.

Leadership and management is good. Effective leadership inspires staff who work very well as a team to improve the care and education for all children. There is a clear vision for the setting that is given to parents and displayed with it's aims for children, parents and carers, staff, the curriculum and the environment. They monitor the provision for nursery education and strive to improve their practice in supporting. This is done through identifying weaknesses and reporting on them in the annual evaluation. From that a development plan is drawn up outlining the improvements to be made. However, the monitoring of more able children is not always effective enough.

Staff have regular appraisals and their training needs identified. They are committed to improving their skills.

The manager builds links with the local community by welcoming students, other professionals supporting children with special needs and by promoting other events being held at the community centre from which the nursery operates. These include "family learning" workshops for parents and children.

The manager has a clear understanding of where the children are in their learning and is constantly looking at how to improve the environment, the activities and resources provided to enhance learning experiences for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group was asked to improve documentation regarding the child protection procedure and parental consent to seek emergency medical treatment and advice; to ensure the accessibility of staff records and that relevant reference materials are available to them and to strengthen procedures for informing Ofsted of staff changes.

Good progress has been made with regard to the documentation needed. Children are better protected as all the required parental consent is in place and all policies are in line with current regulation and guidance. Records of staff checks are available on site and staff have access to a broad range of materials including the National Standards and the setting has implemented clear procedures for informing Ofsted of staff changes.

At the last education inspection there were no key issues raised but the group was asked to consider making improvements in two areas. These were to encourage

children's use of books and to increase opportunities for more able children to extend their calculating skills.

Children have many opportunities to handle books in the daily routine of the setting as they are available in all areas of the play environment. Children enjoy reading alone or in a group. They benefit from borrowing books from the group to share at home with parents and carers. Children are encouraged to develop calculating skills as part of the free play sessions and at small group time.

Complaints since the last inspection

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. There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

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 ensure activities provided sufficiently extend the learning opportunities for the more able children to ensure they reach their full potential.

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