

# Norcot Early Years Centre

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	109751
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	377979
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Susan Mann HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	137
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tom Steele
<b>Headteacher</b>	Diana Heath
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11–12 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	82 Lyndhurst Road Tilehurst Reading RG30 6UB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01189 015577
<b>Fax number</b>	01189 015679
<b>Email address</b>	head.norcot@reading.gov.uk

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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	Norcot Early Years Centre
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	69
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	27 February 2008

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<b>Age group</b>	0–5
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	24–25 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	377979



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Mann

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gillian Bosschaert

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed over nine hours of teaching and child-initiated activities. They observed three teachers and all other staff who worked with the children and were present during the inspection. Of this time, one and a half hours was spent observing the day-care provision. Inspectors spoke with children, met the Chair of the Governing Body, held meetings with senior staff and discussions with teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at written policies and procedures, information provided for parents, safety information and records of meetings. They reviewed the questionnaire responses from 63 parents and carers, as well as those completed by staff.

## Information about the school

Norcot Early Years Centre provides nursery provision in its Hillside and Meadowside groups. It also provides registered day care for 50 children aged between birth and eight years in the Waterside group. This provision is registered on the early years register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the childcare register. Currently 69 children attend the day care provision known as Waterside. The setting is also registered for 45 children aged between three and eight years to attend out-of-school care: the school offers breakfast, lunch and tea clubs and also provides a holiday club during the school holidays. A children's centre shares the site. The Early Years Centre nursery, day care and children's centre are all led by the same person, and are all managed by the governing body. The majority of children have White British backgrounds. There are a small minority of disabled children and those with special educational needs.

The school holds the silver award of Reading in Bloom, and was recently awarded a silver award in Supporting Apprentices.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is an outstanding nursery school. The day care provision for all children, including those aged below three years, is also outstanding.
- Almost all children make rapid progress in their learning and development. This is most notable for those children who start nursery with levels of development that are below those typically found. All groups of pupils make equally outstanding progress: disabled children and those with special educational needs make excellent progress as a result of superb intervention and learning support.
- All staff have exceptionally high expectations of children's capabilities: the quality of teaching is outstanding.
- The nursery makes excellent use of the assessment information on children's progress. This is analysed to show how well pupils learn in all areas of learning and to identify any variation in the rate of children's learning so that any decline can be swiftly addressed. However, systems are not wholly consistent between the nursery and day care.
- Children are extremely considerate towards one another. They behave very well, and show a mature understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe at the nursery, for example when on 'learning through nature' activities. Staff have the highest regard for the safety and well-being of every child.
- Children are enthusiastic learners and have a great deal of fun. The play-based curriculum delivered both indoors and outdoors, provides exciting and memorable experiences for children.
- All leaders of the school work very well together and are highly effective in applying an ambitious and ongoing improvement which has the needs of children at its heart.
- Partnership with parents and carers is exceptionally good for almost all families and provides them with an excellent knowledge of what children are learning and how well their children are progressing.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve even more the current systems of assessment data analysis by:
  - making further use of information about the learning and development of children who attend Waterside day care, by using tracking processes fully and consistently throughout the nursery and day care provision
  - using this information in the day care to monitor children’s progress even more rigorously.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children make outstanding progress in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage at both the nursery and the day care. Children’s records and data show all achieve especially well in personal and social development, language and literacy, and physical development. Children who come into the nursery and day care with skills and experiences that are below national expectations make particularly rapid progress and almost all catch up with their peers by the end of their time at nursery. Disabled children and those with special educational needs make similarly excellent progress as a result of very good targeted intervention. Those children attending the nursery who are of Reception age make swift progress from their starting points as a result of individually-planned learning that suits their needs very well. There are no perceptible differences between the achievement of boys and girls, or of children from minority ethnic backgrounds. Children who speak English as an additional language make similarly excellent progress: although their development in reading and other aspects of language and literacy is slower to improve than that of other groups, their rate of progress quickens as they spend more time in the nursery. Children’s attainment is generally well above average when they move into the Reception Year.

Children are articulate and many have an extensive vocabulary as a result of the high emphasis all staff place on improving speech and language skills. Almost all children show a love of stories and books, listening intently when stories are read to them: in Meadowside, children recall the story of ‘The Monkey with the Bright Blue Bottom’ with good accuracy, showing how well they understand the story. They routinely include their phonics learning (the linking of sounds and letters) in their play, for example making the sound of ‘s’ as they move through a staggered gate. Children are highly adept at forming recognisable letters to notate their work. In their mathematical learning, children are especially skilled in using mathematical language to solve problems. The extensive use of the outdoors in children’s learning leads to exceptionally rapid physical development. Frequent use of tricycles, large-scale resources, such as sand areas, construction and climbing areas, means that children are exceptionally confident to move around in large spaces.

In the questionnaire, almost all parents and carers said their children are making

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good progress at nursery and day care: the inspection findings support this view. One parent wrote, 'This nursery has been a wonderful experience for my child. The staff give wonderful information to parents as to what the children are doing and what they can do at home to help the children with their learning and education.'

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is outstanding throughout the nursery and Waterside. Staff are welcoming and enabling: this encourages children's confidence and resilience. Children's learning is promoted extremely well in all areas of learning because staff have an excellent knowledge of the abilities of each child. Regular observation and assessment are summarised in children's profiles and challenging next steps are planned so that each child develops at a pace suited to their needs. The provision to support disabled children and those with special educational needs is exceptional. The learning support assistant and other staff work very well with the special needs coordinator to give children a superb level of both teaching and care. Almost all parents believe their children are taught well; a view that is confirmed by the inspection evidence.

The long-term curriculum is planned collaboratively between all staff. A great deal of emphasis is placed on children developing their personal, social, communication and literacy skills. Teachers have a high level of influence in planning to ensure that learning is promoted rapidly. This overarching planning is then tuned to meet the needs of each child. All learning opportunities stem from their interests and needs. A wide range of cultural opportunities are provided. For example, children have talked about their own experiences over the Christmas period which gave them an opportunity to consider how each family is different. Children have ample opportunities for reflection and calm. They are encouraged to think about how characters of a story might feel, and some areas of the nursery are purposely built to provide calm spaces to work and play for those who might need this. Activities set a very high level of challenge for children and staff have high aspirations for their development. For example, children in Hillside copy Chinese letters using black paint and fine brushes. Some are able to make a very good attempt at copying the letters, while some make their own interpretation. All are wholly engaged in the activity and learn from discussing the letters, their meaning, and the differences between Chinese and English print.

All staff give high priority to developing children's independence. In Waterside, the indoor and outdoor learning environments are extremely well resourced for children to access resources freely. Excellent interaction and subtle use of questions help children extend their learning extremely well. For example, a member of staff joined a child playing with magnetic letters on a board. Together they made a long line of ten letters for the child to match, which she did, talking about the letter sounds as she did so.

In the nursery classes, there is a particularly high focus on outdoor learning. Every aspect of learning is provided outdoors as well as in the classrooms in all types of

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weather. The excellent priority given to child-initiated play throughout is exemplified in the nursery's own 'learning through nature' programme. In this regular activity, groups of children embark on a nature walk. With an excellent level of adult supervision to ensure safety, children make decisions about their route and develop their activity. In one session, they decided there was a dragon in the woods and set about looking for clues to find him, including remnants of his nest (some hay) and 'footprints' in the mud. Staff interaction is superb to support children's thinking.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

An overwhelming majority of parents and carers say they feel the standard of behaviour is good and that their children feel safe when at the nursery and day care. The inspection found that children behave exceptionally well and have excellent attitudes towards their learning. They are considerate to one another and are very good at working together collaboratively. They spontaneously help one another in many ways, helping each other to put boots on before going outside and sharing resources with one another. Instances of unwanted or unkind behaviour are extremely rare. Staff deal with such occasions promptly and with an excellent level of explanation which suits the children's young age. Children respond very well to adults' instructions. They have an exceptionally good awareness of keeping safe. They are accustomed to accessing areas and resources independently and they do this with careful regard for the safety of themselves and that of others. When children are off the nursery premises, they walk safely to their destination, showing excellent understanding of road safety practice.

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders and managers have sustained previous outstanding practice by maintaining a systematic approach to strategic development which centres on the needs of the children who attend. Excellent continuous professional development is firmly embedded so that staff continue to improve their skills. Staff share professional expertise with other settings and schools, and attend an exceptional range of training to maintain excellent standards. The governing body is fully engaged in all management processes and provides a high level of challenge to the school's managers to promote excellent practice. As a result, the capacity for the school to keep improving is particularly strong.

The quality of teaching and its impact are rigorously monitored to ensure children receive outstanding learning each day. Assessment of children's individual progress is rigorous throughout the nursery and day care and those in charge scrutinise this information to maintain outstanding levels of progress. In the nursery, sophisticated use is made of robust data analysis to enhance the monitoring of progress. Although there are plans in place to implement similar systems in the day-care provision, this has not been completed and so the process throughout the nursery and day care is not consistent. The out-of-school care is managed well so children receive positive experiences that meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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The curriculum is outstanding and full of innovative learning opportunities that enrich children's understanding in all areas of learning. It has an especially positive impact on developing their personal, social and emotional well-being, which empowers them to become excellent learners. Children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is outstanding. Children have extremely accurate views of what is right and wrong. They are highly sociable with one another. They have a good understanding of their own local community as well as of the wider world. All leaders and managers ensure each child has equality of opportunity and access to the best provision possible. Progress for each group is checked by leaders and the governing body so none falls behind the standards of the rest. Policies and procedures hold equality in the highest regard to ensure any unfairness is dealt with effectively. Inclusive attitudes are thoroughly embedded throughout the nursery and day care in the way both children and staff interact with one another. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements. Recruitment and staff procedures are rigorous to ensure adults working with children are suitable to do so. Leaders are tenacious in their liaison with external agencies to keep children safe.



## The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The registered provision provides for children aged from three months to under five years of age. It meets the requirements of the Early Years Register. The overall effectiveness of this Early Years Foundation Stage phase, the quality of education, outcomes, leadership and management are all outstanding. A parent, whose child attends Waterside, said of the provision, 'The variety and educational activities are amazing, I would recommend Norcot to anyone.' Children under three years of age make excellent progress in all areas of learning. They are exceptionally confident and show high levels of self-assurance. They make excellent progress in their personal and social development, and in their language development. Staff give these aspects high priority. For example, a group of children took great delight in singing along to the 'Hokey Cokey' with a member of staff, laughing and giggling as they did so.

Children are highly inquisitive in their learning, and the environment nurtures their curiosity. Staff are extremely attentive and demonstrate an excellent knowledge of children's development. Planning and assessment processes are detailed and prioritise individual needs so that each child fulfils the next steps in their development. Children are extremely considerate of one another and play cooperatively. Leadership of the younger children's provision is wholly focused on the safety and development of children. Links with the nursery are excellent. Procedures for staff training, evaluation and planning are aligned to share expertise and promote excellence, which promotes continuous improvement very well.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	1

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**

26 January 2012

Dear Children



### **Inspection of Norcot Early Years Centre, Tilehurst RG30 6UB**

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome when we visited your nursery. It was really helpful for us to see you doing all your activities. We enjoyed talking with you and watching how you learn.

We have judged the nursery and day care of Norcot to be outstanding. This means that it is one of the best nurseries. So much of what happens at Norcot is excellent. There are too many things to mention them all, but these are some we thought were especially good.

- We were very impressed with how well you all behave. You are very kind to one another and you listen very well to the adults who help you to learn and look after you.
- The staff keep you extremely safe, and you help them to do this because you are careful not to hurt yourselves or each other when playing outdoors or walking to the woods.
- There are lots of exciting things for you to do and play with. This helps you to learn very well. Many of you can write your name and other letters besides, and you know lots of numbers. You all enjoy listening to stories and playing outdoors which helps you to learn even more.
- Your teachers and the adults who look after you are very good at helping all of you to learn. When you need a little bit of extra help to understand something, adults are very good at helping you, and they are always pleased to see you try hard to do your best.

We have asked the adults working in the day care to do even more than they do to check how well you are learning every day.

We really enjoyed our time at Norcot and hope you all continue to have a lovely time there.

Yours sincerely

Susan Mann  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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