



Norcot Early Years Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 109751
LEA Reading

Inspection number 274286
Inspection dates 1 March 2005
Reporting inspector Mr M Onyon

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Nursery	School address	82 Lyndhurst Road
School category	Community		Tilehurst, Reading
Age range of pupils	3 - 5		RG30 6UB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 901 5577
Number on roll	142	Fax number	0118 901 5679
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	David Wheeler
Date of previous inspection	February 2000	Headteacher	Miss D M Heath

Age group	Published	Reference no.
3 - 5	March 2005	274286

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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Norcot Early Years Centre and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors and a Childcare Inspector.

Description of the school

Norcot Early Years Centre provides part-time and full-time nursery education to children between the ages of three and five. On entering the nursery it was apparent that the majority of attendees have skills below those expected for children of their age. The centre is designated an Early Years Excellence Centre. There are nine children identified with special educational needs. Five children have English as an additional language and are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school provides a broad range of extended care for children from birth to five years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

The centre provides an excellent education for its children. Children make very good progress including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. This is because of the exceptional learning environment, an exciting and relevant curriculum and very high quality of teaching and care. Children enjoy learning and prosper because their work is very well planned to meet their individual needs. Nearly all leave the school with skills that are well above expectations. The school provides very good value for money and has no significant areas to improve.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The centre has made very good progress since the last inspection. It is now a designated Early Excellence Centre. High standards have been maintained, enabling children to achieve very well. It has developed very good relationships with parents and carers. Care provision for children from birth to five years has been extended, successfully involving a number of external support agencies.

Grade: 1

Capacity to improve

The centre's self-evaluation is very good. Appropriate areas for improvement are identified and tackled enthusiastically. Despite its very good progress, the centre is not complacent. Outstanding vision from the headteacher, coupled with excellent leadership at all levels, is driving the centre to improve standards. This indicates that the centre has very good capacity to improve.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant areas for further improvement.

Achievement and standards

Children achieve outstandingly well in their personal, social and emotional development. They also achieve very well in their language and communication skills, mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. Children are on target to exceed the standards expected for their age when they leave the Early Years Centre. Children identified with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language receive very good support, and achieve very well.

The majority of children start in the nursery with skills which are below those expected for their age. The centre's emphasis on encouraging and supporting children to think for themselves enables them to become self-assured learners. They confidently talk to people other than those who are well known to them and know that information can be found in books. In early writing many children are beginning to form recognisable letters. Children who are not yet four show confidence with numbers, counting up to three or four objects and saying the number name for each item.

Skills are developed exceptionally well because children are given time to explore their environment, to build relationships, and to be aware of the impact of their actions on others. They develop very good imagination and play very well with others. They have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on their body. Children use laptop computers very independently, enabling them to draw and print pictures.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

Children flourish in the centre and enjoy learning. Parents say that their children feel safe and are very happy coming to the centre. Many of the children have attended care sessions provided at the day care centre, and feel at ease, having established very good relationships. Adults know the children very well, and build very effectively on their positive early experiences.

Children's personal development is outstanding and at the heart of the centre's ethos. Children work and play together very well, demonstrating exceptional concentration, very good consideration for others, and a willingness to share. Opportunities to collect equipment, to care for materials, and to move freely in the large outdoor area encourage children to take responsibility. They are involved in making decisions about how things might be improved and their behaviour is very good.

Strong emphasis is placed on health, children's safety, and opportunities to enjoy their learning. Children become assured and self-confident through the excellent use of the creatively-designed outdoor learning area. They have planted flowers and vegetables, and created beautiful garden areas. They think about the things they see, and reflect on their colour and beauty; as a result their spiritual development is very good. They know about their local community through meeting visitors and visits. Children are very aware of other cultures and have recently celebrated the Chinese New Year, creating an imaginative display.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The school judges teaching and learning to be outstanding, and inspectors fully agree.

The centre's commitment to meeting the specific needs of each child, and the consistent approach to supporting children's learning shown by all adults, are major reasons why teaching and learning are outstanding. Very high-quality planning at all levels, and imaginative use of resources ensure that all children are provided with especially challenging and stimulating learning experiences, so that they remain focused for very long periods. All adults are particularly good at intervening to prompt or question children to extend their learning, so that their gains in skills and knowledge are very good. The excellent relationships ensure that children respond very well to adults, know that their views are valued, and want to succeed. The very good emphasis on personal and social development has helped children to become very independent, to develop the confidence to explore or test new things, and to gain a very good understanding of what they are learning.

The quality and use of assessment is outstanding. Teachers gather regular information about how well each child is progressing and adjust the planned activities for the next session. Children and their parents are able to make contributions, and consequently children know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The centre's commitment to involve parents/carers in their children's learning is outstanding, and very much valued by parents/carers. For example, in liaison with a local college, the centre runs very effective adult literacy classes.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum is excellent. It is underpinned by the school's caring and supportive ethos, and the exceptional learning environment. The curriculum is rich, relevant and interesting. The school's commitment to meet individual needs is at the heart of its success and the curriculum supports this particularly well. Children with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, benefit immensely from learning programmes that provide the correct level of challenge and reinforcement.

Pupils are motivated by the exceptionally good use of the imaginatively designed accommodation and high quality resources. For example, the 'jungle' play area and gardens with plants from other countries give children many unique learning experiences. Great care is taken to organise learning through

topics relevant to the children's own knowledge or experiences, such as the recent Tsunami disaster.

Activities integrate skills and knowledge from several areas of learning, and this helps children to make considerable progress in gaining comprehensive skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of topics. Termly planning is very effectively based on the point in their learning that children have reached, and very successfully monitored and adjusted to meet children's needs.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

Care offered by the centre is outstanding and makes a significant difference to children's lives. The quality of the registered childcare in the day care centre is of the highest standard, and meets all fourteen of the national standards for day care and child minding. There is a wide variety of interesting and stimulating play materials which provide a balanced range of activities to successfully promote children's development.

Adults review children's progress daily and use 'daily diary' sessions to reflect on children's learning, and to provide support for individuals. Adults use what they know about the children to extend their learning. Children who are not achieving as well as they might are encouraged further, with specific planning to meet their needs and promote their development, for example through the involvement of a speech and language therapist.

Work with a wide range of support agencies is very effective, ensuring there are procedures in place to support the most vulnerable children. Innovative partnerships enable staff from a number of support agencies to work regularly alongside staff in the centre. The centre has worked diligently towards designation as a Children's Centre and expects to achieve the status in the near future. The school is very well maintained and great care is taken to ensure a safe environment for learning.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides inspired leadership through actively encouraging all adults to play a full part, to offer suggestions for improvement, and to develop new ideas. Her persistence that the school should offer all that is the very best, through imaginative teaching and inspirational ideas, influences every aspect of the centre's work. The desire to continuously seek improvement makes the centre modest in its evaluation. The school bases its judgements of success on the children's very good progress. All adults working in the Centre rigorously monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Inclusion is at the heart of the centre's provision and equality of opportunity is rigorously promoted. Barriers to learning are assiduously monitored and every effort applied to remove them. Parents are valued as partners; their views are regularly sought and acted on, and advice offered to enable them to support the learning of their children. They speak very highly of the quality of education and care offered by the centre.

The centre implements innovative ideas and works very effectively in sharing its good practice through partnerships with other schools. Staff regularly visit schools to disseminate good practice and provide resources for others to use. This work is having a significant impact in improving the quality of provision in those schools. The school manages finances very well and successfully attracts additional funding to develop its work. Governors are actively involved and support the school well. However, they rely on the leadership team for information and are not always strident in challenging the work of the centre. Effective teamwork enables all staff to be involved in management and all feel truly valued.

The centre carries out rigorous and very effective self-evaluation. In partnership with a cluster of local schools and officers from the Local Education Authority it is able to effectively validate the evaluation. The centre is assiduous in gathering data about its effectiveness and continuously challenges aspects of its practice to see if they can be improved.

Grade: 1

Dear children at Norcot Early Years Centre

We have asked Miss Heath to read this letter to you so that you can find out what we thought of your Centre when we visited recently.

Thank you for welcoming us and helping us to look at the things that you do. We very much enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn.

What we liked most about your centre

It is a happy place where everybody gets chances to show how well they can do things.

You are very friendly and welcome visitors to your school with a friendly smile.

You are very kind and polite to each other when you are learning and when you are playing outside.

You enjoy learning about new things and your teachers help you to enjoy what you are doing.

Lots of things that you do are interesting, exciting and fun.

You are trusted to make your mind up about the things you want to do.

You look after your centre very well and it is a lovely place to be.

Your headteacher and teachers run the school very well. They listen to you and work hard to make things better for you.

Your parents and carers think that you go to a very good centre and we agree.

What we have asked your centre to do now:

To carry on trying to make your centre even better than it already is.

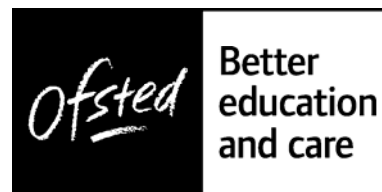
Yours sincerely,

Mr Onyon, Ms Wilkinson and Ms Blackwell

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DAY CARE INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY257099



INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 1 March 2005
Inspector Name Denise Blackwell

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Out of School Day Care
Full Day Care
Setting Name Norcot Early Years Centre
Setting Address 82 Lyndhurst Road
Tilehurst, Reading RG30 6UB

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Norcot Early Years Centre

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Norcot Child Care and Holiday Club

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care. When making judgements, inspectors have regard to how well the provider meets the National Standards for under Eights Day Care and Childminding. A list of these is attached. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement.

This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

Information about the setting

Norcot Early Years Centre is located in Tilehurst, a suburb of Reading, Berkshire. Norcot Early Years Centre consists of a maintained nursery school, a day care centre and an out of school club. The centre serves the local community. The centre provides full day care for 50 children from birth to eight years of age in the Waterside building, and out of school care for 45 children aged from three to eight years of age, in either the Hillside or Meadowside building.

The day care centre is situated in a single storey, open-plan, purpose built building, with an enclosed outdoor area. The out of school club runs in one of the nursery school buildings which also have enclosed outdoor play areas.

The day care centre is open from 8.00 to 18.00, all year round except for the Christmas holiday, bank holidays and inset days. The out of school club is open from 8.00 to 18.00 during school holiday periods except Christmas. There are currently 78 children on roll at the day care centre, who attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 14 members of staff in the day care centre who work directly with the children, or manage childcare staff, all of whom have early years and childcare qualifications. Five of these members of staff with a level two qualification are working towards a level three qualification. The out of school club is managed by the Outreach Officer, who has a level three qualification.

How good is the Day Care?

Norcot Early Years Centre provides good quality care for children.

The day care centre is warm and welcoming, and provides a secure environment in which children feel at ease. Space is well organised to enable children to move between areas safely. Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge needed and staff induction arrangements ensure staff are well prepared to work with the children. Plans are effective in ensuring that there are sufficient staff, and that space and resources are used well to support children's development.

Risk assessments ensure staff are well informed of possible dangers. Staff are

safety conscious and explain to the children why there are some things they should not do such as running indoors. Staff act as good role models and encourage children to have safe hygiene practices. The children are provided with a varied diet of good, healthy, nutritious food. Resources reflect the diversity of society and the local area. All children have the opportunity and are encouraged to take part in activities. The centre has developed good partnerships with other professionals, which ensures children are well supported and individual needs met.

There is a wide variety of interesting and stimulating play materials which provide a balanced range of activities to promote children's development. Children are able to choose what they want to do. There is good interaction between children and adults, who encourage and question the children to extend their learning. Children's behaviour is good. They are praised and encouraged by staff and are learning what is acceptable behaviour.

The centre has good relationships with parents. Parents are given a clear and informative handbook about the day care centre, but it does not include details about the complaints and child protection procedures. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress and are made to feel welcome.

What is being done well?

Provision for children under 15 months is very good. Staff give excellent attention to meeting the children's individual needs for eating and sleeping. They plan activities well to give the children interesting sensory experiences such as painting, and their calm and confident approach reassures and settles children who are upset or tired.

There is a strong emphasis on meeting individual needs throughout the centre. Children with special needs are well supported to take part in all activities. Resources are provided which reflect the diverse area and backgrounds from which the children come.

Children take part in a wide range of activities. They can choose what they want to do and all equipment is stored in child height units so that children can access it easily. Activities are chosen and led by the children and are well supported by the staff.

The centre employs a cook who makes fresh and nutritious meals each day such as roast beef and vegetables or cauliflower cheese, to promote healthy eating habits. Children are provided with a healthy snack and older children are encouraged to be independent in choosing when they want their snack, and how much they want to eat.

Children are able to move between the different areas in the centre and are not confined to their own age group. Freedom of choice is also extended to the outdoor area. Children can choose if, and when, they want to play outside, and are provided with protective equipment such as umbrellas depending on the weather conditions.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

The outdoor play area provides a wealth of exciting and imaginative learning opportunities for the children. They can smell and feel the different plants, and create their own physical challenges in the play area. Planting in the different areas in the garden reflects different countries in the world such as Australia and Africa and the centre has plans to include wooden animal figures in each country area.
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What needs to be improved?

The accessibility of the complaints and child protection procedures for parents

Previous Complaints (This section applies only to inspections carried out from 1 November 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later).
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There have been no complaints

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration. As a result of this inspection conditions of registration on the existing certificate remain.
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WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection
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Std	Recommendation
12	Ensure parents are easily able to access the complaints procedure and child protection procedure for the centre.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14: DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.