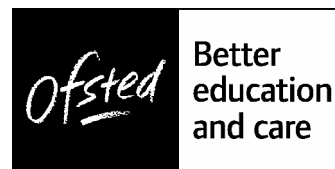


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26 March 2007

Ms Diana Heath  
Head of Centre  
Norcot Early Years Centre  
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RG30 6UB

Dear Ms Heath

Ofsted survey inspection programme - Evaluation of the impact of children's centres on children and their families 2006/07

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, children, parents and representatives from other groups, during our visit on Tuesday 20 March 2007.

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of your work, the visit had a particular focus on the impact of your provision on children and their families.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the centres visited, but individual centres will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements we made included: interviews with parents, staff and representatives from a range of agencies, scrutiny of relevant documentation, and observations of sessions with children and their families.

The overall effectiveness of the provision of an integrated offer of services for children and their families was judged to be outstanding.

#### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are outstanding.

- Children make very good progress, especially in their language and communication skills.
- Children develop very high levels of confidence and independence.

- Planning is very child centred, focussing well on their individual styles of learning.
- Individual progress is monitored very well by staff.
- The approach to recording evidence of progress is not sufficiently developed to ensure consistency.
- The Every Child Matters agenda is covered very well in activities for children and in the family learning opportunities.
- Family learning opportunities have a very positive impact on achievement for parents and children.
- Behaviour is very good.

## Quality of provision

The quality of provision is outstanding.

- Excellent relationships are evident between children, staff and parents.
- The centre offers a very good range of provision. This is flexible and evolving, providing good opportunities for parents to participate in learning or employment.
- Parents are very positive about the quality of provision and the impact it has on their lives.
- The use of outdoor space for learning is excellent. Children are supported very well in assessing and minimising risk.
- Services meet local needs very well because they are developed through a thorough analysis of need and in response to parental feedback.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- The Senior Management Team (SMT) is rigorous in its self evaluation and knows the strengths and areas for development well.
- There are clear lines of responsibility for managing the provision through SMT.
- The broad package covers the core offer well. The centre is aware of areas where coherence can be improved and is taking steps to address this.
- The centre works well with other agencies, but there is limited consideration of the ways in which the overall impact of the provision on outcomes for children and families can be evaluated.
- There are very good levels of consultation with parents and children.
- The commitment to continuous improvement is impressive and the centre has an excellent capacity to improve.

## Inclusion

Inclusion is outstanding.

- The centre is extremely child focused. Provision is shaped around children's individual needs and is therefore fully inclusive.
- There are very good relationships with the local special school to ensure children with particular needs can be included in holiday play clubs.
- There is very effective planning for individual children to ensure they are supported well on transfer to primary education.
- Fathers are supported well through the Dad's and children group.

Areas for development, which we discussed included:

- providing opportunities for services to develop a deeper understanding of each others roles and explore different ways of working together
- further developing the approach for following up referrals of families who may be reluctant to access services, by considering the most appropriate person or agency to make initial contact
- with the Local Authority, engaging the commitment of health services to prioritise working with Children's Centres to improve outcomes for children and families.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop provision at your centre.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on Ofsted's website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Anita Wade  
HM Inspector of Schools

Anne Mitchell  
Childcare Inspector