

Normanhurst School

— Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY240417
Inspection date 24/06/2008
Inspector Sarah Williams

Setting address 68-74 Station Road, Chingford, London, E4 7BA

Telephone number 0208529 4307

E-mail

Registered person

Type of inspection Nursery Education

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be freely reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided the source and date of publication are stated.

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 provider must give a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must give a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Day Care and Childminding (inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 No 2300 Regulations 5 and 6).

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 NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Normanhurst School was founded in 1923 and is a member of the Independent Schools Association. It is one of three schools administered by Oak-Tree Schools Ltd.

The school is situated in the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

There are a total of 210 children on roll of whom 16 are in receipt of nursery funding. The funded children use the Nursery Unit, Reception classroom, school hall, and have access to an outside play area. Opening hours are from 08:30 to 15:15 on weekdays during school term times.

Staff support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. Eleven members of staff work with the funded children of whom over half have appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have an exceptionally sound knowledge of all aspects of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They plan and deliver a wide-ranging, stimulating and balanced curriculum covering all areas of learning. Children are inspired and motivated to learn, making excellent progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Equal emphasis is given to each of the areas of learning, producing well-rounded children who have a sound grasp of the skills and attitudes they need to pursue further learning. They are independent and develop self-reliance as a result of their confidence and high self-esteem.

The classrooms are equipped with every conceivable resource to allow children maximum choice to follow their own interests and make very productive use of their time. Children in the nursery have a relaxed timetable which enables the skilled staff to observe them at play and plan the next steps to progress their learning. The sessions are very well paced to ensure children are always engaged in worthwhile activities, whether it is playtime or classroom time. Spontaneous learning and child-initiated activities are encouraged, adding to the richness of experience.

A programme of outings to nearby open spaces and other educational destinations enhances teaching and brings memorable experiences to life. Children excitedly recall searching for minibeasts and observing them to learn about living things. The topics are followed up with many and varied activities in the classroom incorporating maths, technology, language, imagination and creativity.

Children work at their own pace and are suitably challenged to achieve highly. Equally, those needing additional help are extremely well supported and aided to reach their potential. Visitors are welcomed in to discuss their occupations, giving children a first hand glimpse into aspects of the wider world; a nurse shows them x-rays and how to apply a bandage and a policeman describes his role in the

community. Staff observe and record children's progress in meticulous detail, evaluating what they see and planning future learning based on what the children can do.

Children develop their competencies very well across the four aspects of communication: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Many children are accomplished readers by the end of the reception year, enjoying books and reading with expression and understanding. They can create stories showing excellent knowledge of story structure and imaginative flair. These are produced as books and available to share with friends and parents. Free access to quality mark-making materials encourages emergent writing and an introduction to phonics helps word-building skills as children link sounds with letters. They confidently identify initial and end sounds and enjoy rhyming activities to extend vocabulary. Children eagerly listen to stories and respond with laughter and emotion at the characters' trials and tribulations.

Children begin to see connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They match and sort and use mathematical language such as more than, one more, one less to help them to solve problems across a wide range of practical activities and in their imaginative play. The 'sweet shop' is popular as children choose and sort items from labelled sweet jars, handing over money to complete their 'purchases'. Older children conduct a survey about holiday preferences and collate the results as a team. They confidently calculate which groups of responses are the largest and the smallest.

Children have fantastic opportunities to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. They learn about life-cycles and the seasons, and the rich variety of wildlife and natural phenomena in the local area. They closely observe patterns and recreate, for example, a spiral as seen on a snail's shell. Making food for the wild birds that visit the playground helps children understand the needs of living things. Technology plays a daily part in school life and the children have hands-on experience of a digital camera, computers and keyboards to support all areas of learning. They gain an understanding of the passage of time as they look at change and growth in relation to themselves and their families. Visiting the fire station is an exciting opportunity to see and experience at close range an essential aspect of daily life and think about the people who are there to help us all.

Children express their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, role play and imaginative play. Drama and dance, such as the ribbon dancing, are introduced at an early stage and children enjoy performing to one another as well as a wider audience at times. High quality, imaginative art and craft activities produce colourful and pleasing work that is used to good effect to create displays and illustrate the broad range of topics covered. Children become engrossed in imaginative play using the role play items, props and costumes to act out and recreate roles from domestic play to a hairdresser's salon. The small world toys develop imagination at another level, encouraging co-operation as children create scenarios with animals and vehicles.

Children's physical development is promoted as they run and move freely in the outdoor play area and playground. They can climb and explore the exciting fixed equipment, safely supervised but allowed to extend themselves and build their confidence along with their developing skills. They understand the changes that occur when they exert themselves and feel their hearts beating faster.

Children learn about aspects of a healthy lifestyle such as which foods are good for growth and which should be reserved as occasional treats. They enjoy freshly prepared meals, taking account of their individual dietary needs, and are offered alternatives if they ask. Drinking water is available at all times and children independently help themselves, washing and drying their cups afterwards.

Children's fine motor skills become honed as they use the mark-making equipment, manipulative toys and puzzles. Children are confident in using tools for woodwork, sewing and preparing sandwiches.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are warmly welcomed at the start of each day and quickly develop a strong sense of belonging. They delight in sharing the wonderful books detailing their activities, recorded in photographs and text. Children develop positive attitudes to learning and high self-esteem as they are continually praised and rewarded for their efforts. They are happy, and eager to embrace new experiences, knowing they can ask for help or clarification from any of the adults they encounter.

Children's understanding of diversity is enhanced by the images, resources and activities celebrating world cultures, festivals and events. Divali, Chinese New Year and many others are included throughout the calendar year and form part of the seasonal celebrations, sitting alongside favourites such as Christmas and Easter.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff have high expectations and set clear, consistent boundaries for behaviour which helps children gain an understanding of right and wrong and how to negotiate effectively to maintain a harmonious atmosphere and build positive relationships with their peers and the adults caring for them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are exceptionally well supported in this setting. One to one support is available for children who need it and to ensure that all children remain fully integrated, able to take part in class activities and daily routines. All children are encouraged and supported to achieve their full potential.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit from the extremely effective part played by parents and carers. Parents are included at all stages to build a picture of the child and his/her family and home life to ensure continuity of care. Staff get to know each child extremely well as they speak to parents informally on a daily basis. Parents' views and opinions are held in high regard and contribute effectively to the day to day care and education their children

receive. They support the setting by responding to appeals for resources to include in topic work as well as materials for crafts and modelling. Parents and carers have ample opportunity to be well informed of their child's progress and development, whether by the informal daily exchange of information at the start and end of sessions, or at the various formal evenings and sessions arranged throughout the school year. Parents speak very warmly about the setting and appreciate the approachability of staff and the opportunity to discuss any issues regarding their child. Parents and staff work very well together to support children's learning, both at school and at home.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

There are robust procedures in place for the recruitment and employment of staff, this ensures children are cared for by adults who have been checked and vetted to ensure their suitability to be in contact with children. Staff are deployed effectively at all times throughout the day to maintain the required ratios and at many times exceed minimum requirements. Space and resources, all of high quality and appealingly and imaginatively presented, are used very effectively, both indoors and outside, to ensure a stimulating and exciting learning environment in which children can flourish and develop.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The child-centred ethos is apparent and the obvious dedication and enthusiasm of staff has a positive effect on the children. All staff are conscientious and work as a team to create a consistently effective setting where children are highly motivated and make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. There is a celebration of strengths as well as an awareness of areas for improvement, which results in a balanced and realistic outlook as staff strive to provide the best environment for the children.

Staff's professional development is addressed during the annual appraisal process, however, training is also ongoing with every opportunity taken to attend courses and gain knowledge to keep abreast of trends and developments in the child care and education field. The senior staff take an active part in the day to day activities of the early years unit and the favourable adult to child ratios mean that children's individual care and learning needs are extremely well known to the staff.

Experienced staff demonstrate well established, inspirational teaching methods to ensure children's engagement and maintain the high standards they have come to expect.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2473) which is available from Ofsted's website:
www.ofsted.gov.uk