



YMCA Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY314359
Inspection date	13 March 2006
Inspector	Angela Rowley
Setting Address	Hilton Street, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan, Lancashire, WN4 8PD
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Registered person	Ashton, Wigan & District YMCA
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School care, Crèche

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

YMCA Nursery originally opened in 1993, before its re-registration in 2005. It is operated by Ashton, Wigan and District YMCA and is located within the Youth and Community Centre in Ashton-in-Makerfield. There are four purpose planned areas are used for children attending full and sessional care, with additional use of an area on the first floor for crèche and out of school activities. A maximum of 113 children may be cared for at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30

until 18.00, except for bank holidays and a week at Christmas. All children share time-tabled access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 116 children from birth to 11 years on roll. Of these 46 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with special educational needs.

The nursery employs 21 staff, the majority of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are currently three staff working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff implement some good practices which help prevent the spread of infection and keep children healthy. Procedures to keep the premises, toys and equipment clean are consistently practised. Babies sleep in individual cots and older children's bedding is individually labelled. Excellent procedures such as staff consistently wearing disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing sustain good levels of hygiene. However, children do not learn about good hygiene practice when they all share one hand-towel for drying their hands and when they have difficulty accessing soap because the dispenser is broken.

Children are adequately nourished. Younger children learn to respond to their own need for drinks by accessing their own cup when thirsty, whilst older pre-school children help themselves to well organised continuous snack provision. Children's special dietary needs are known and met which ensures children stay healthy. However, children's meals and mealtimes are poorly planned. Many processed foods are included on menus which regularly do not reflect the meal given on the day. For example, highly coloured and flavoured crisps, hot dogs and nuggets are sometimes provided for afternoon tea and whilst young babies are provided with suitable alternatives, some of the meals may not be suitable for very young children and compromises good nutrition.

Staff are beginning to use the Birth to three matters framework appropriately to promote the aspects of a healthy child. A good range of physical play opportunities are provided for babies and toddlers, such as the provision of small slides, tunnels and rockers within their play area. This encourages a healthy lifestyle. However, older children have fewer opportunities to practice large motor skills because staff do not do enough to provide this in the planning or organisation of activities. Children benefit from short daily outdoor play sessions in the whole pre-school group. They exercise vigorously on an adequate range of equipment put out for them and they refine their movements during weekly sessions with an external dance tutor. Children's fine motor skills develop satisfactorily as they begin to use small cutters with the play-dough and begin to develop control of scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in very well maintained premises. All areas are made welcoming to children by the clean decoration, provision of soft furnishings, attractive displays of their own artwork and items of interest displayed at all levels. There is a good range of safe, suitable equipment available throughout the nursery which is effectively organised and enables children to make some independent choices about their play.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimized in the suitably planned premises which has good safety and security precautions such as key coded entrance systems. Practitioners help keep children safe because they understand and comply with well documented health and safety requirements. Children's awareness of safety is heightened as they observe staff wearing high visibility jackets when escorting them from school, during regularly practised fire drills and also during visits from the road safety team when they learn about seatbelt safety.

The children are well protected. Staff have a clear understanding of the nursery's child protection policy and of their responsibilities in the event of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled. Many build confident relationships with their stable carers. Babies become skilful communicators as staff sing with them and emphasise key words which increases their vocabulary. However, opportunities for older children to extend their language and communication skills are fewer, as staff rarely challenge children by questioning and conversing together. For example, staff sit quietly with children as they wait for lunch to arrive.

All children enjoy the textures of natural materials alongside the colours and sounds of manufactured toys which they explore with interest. Practitioners are beginning to use the Birth to three matters framework to help promote children's early development, but have not yet gained a secure understanding of how to use the current assessment systems using natural observations which show how progress is being made. Staff have a suitable understanding of the range of experiences which enables young children make use of their senses and develop creativity. For example, children enjoy spaghetti play, paint, dough, 'gloop' and water.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Practitioners have a sufficient knowledge of the foundation stage curriculum to help children make suitable progress. They plan and provide an appropriate range of activities, although sometimes their delivery method prevents children learning through first hand experiences. The monitoring of children's progress is adequate. Staff observe children regularly which gives them opportunities to identify any concerns. However,

they are unsure how to co-ordinate the current systems which do not always clearly show how progress is being made. Some planned observations are not linked to the most appropriate stepping stone because staff do not have the confidence to use their discretion when evaluating what they have observed. Consequently, their records then do not always show where children make some good progress. This leads to activities not being sufficiently challenging for some.

Children are generally well engaged in their play and co-operate well, as they make cups of tea for each other in the 'café'. They are confident to speak out for themselves and to share their experiences. They are beginning to operate independently by taking part in the setting of tables for lunch, although they do not always assume responsibility for their own personal care as staff sometimes do too much for them, such as wiping their noses. They converse well with each other, although staff do not extend their language skills by questioning and encouraging children to think and remember.

Children use their imaginations well in play. They plan out their roles in the 'café', and they enjoy weekly music and movement sessions. More able children are beginning to recognise the sounds of key letters and make good attempts at writing their own name. However, they have few opportunities to attempt writing in everyday situations. Children's mathematical awareness is developing well. They use mathematical language in their play and they count and calculate in routine activities such as deciding how many forks are needed for lunch. Children explore natural materials. They have had some interesting opportunities to explore what happens when making plaster casts of their own hands. They find out about the environment largely through discussions and activity sheets, but here they lack practical involvement to help them learn and remember. Children develop a sense of the local community through planned outings and through some well planned activities linked to different cultural celebrations.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are warmly welcomed into the nursery. Suitable resources and activities are provided which positively represent diversity and help children develop a positive attitude to others. There are some good systems in place which help staff establish children's individual needs, although a weak key-working system does not facilitate these needs being followed by a consistent carer. Also, in some areas, young children are expected to conform with the routines of the nursery and often do things as a whole group. This practice hinders children's individual needs being met. Children's special educational needs are adequately met. Once their needs are identified, children receive good key-working support and monitoring. However, practitioners lack secure knowledge and confidence in assessing and following up concerns. Also the settings special educational needs policy is outdated.

The children are generally well behaved. Staff promote positive behaviour by giving praise and reward. Children take turns and follow expected codes of conduct. For example, they immediately start to tidy away when they hear the signal of the

tambourine shaker. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children under three benefit from the positive partnerships staff have developed with parents. Informal relationships are evident during relaxed conversations when they drop off and collect their child. Parents of babies also receive some useful information on daily diary sheets which contributes to the provision of consistent care. A detailed nursery prospectus along with regular newsletters keeps parents informed about how the setting operates, although many of the policies are outdated and are in the process of being reviewed.

Partnerships with parents of children receiving funded nursery education are satisfactory. Some attempts have been made to involve parents in their child's learning by detailing planned activities on newsletters and on the large notice-board. Parents, however, have few meaningful opportunities to be informed of their child's achievements or contribute to the assessment process because the nursery only holds an annual parents evening before children move onto school. This hinders a full and accurate assessment of children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Robust recruitment procedures, staff induction and clear documentation work in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Some policies, however, are outdated and although in the process of review, hinders staff and parents knowledge of some procedures.

Space within the setting is well organised. Children play safely, freely and happily with good staff ratios and the excellent provision of one to one care where a need is identified. However, the organisation of group care and nursery routines hinders individual needs being met and often results in children spending too much time 'waiting'.

The leadership and management of the provision is satisfactory. A clear management structure is in place with suitably qualified and experienced leaders. Staff are suitably supported and have some good opportunities for development, although relevant training does not always precede extra responsibilities which hinders children's needs being fully met. The manager effectively assesses many of the nursery's strengths and areas for improvement but not enough focus has been given to evaluating the quality of funded nursery education. Consequently, children's progress is not always accurately recorded and thus more able children sometimes lack challenge.

Overall, the needs of the range of children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the nursery's re-registration.

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.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve children's health by ensuring that meals provided are suitable for young children and are nutritious, and by improving hand washing facilities
- improve the quality of staffs interactions with children to ensure that language and communication skills are routinely promoted and that children are encouraged to think and remember through skilful questioning
- continue to review the nursery's policies and procedures to ensure that they form working tools for staff and conform with current guidance and legislation
- improve the staff deployment to ensure that children spend less time in whole group situations, spend less time 'waiting' and have their individual care needs fully met.

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):

- improve current assessment systems to ensure that clear evidence forms an accurate picture of how children are making progress along the stepping stones so that the information can be used to more effectively plan the next steps for individual children's learning
- improve staffs knowledge of and confidence in identifying special educational needs and also their abilities to co-ordinate and plan for any identified learning

needs

- increase the opportunities provided for parents to be informed of their child's progress and to contribute to the assessment process.

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