



Peppermint Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY306300
Inspection date	25 April 2006
Inspector	Rebecca Elizabeth Khabbazi
Setting Address	Franklin Way, Croydon, CR0 4YD
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Registered person	Canterbury Road Sure Start Childcare Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care

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 good. 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?

Peppermint Children's Centre opened in 2005, and is one of a number of centres established by Broad Green Sure Start. The centre comprises a nursery which is open on weekdays from 07:30 - 18:00 all year round, and a preschool which runs from 09:30 - 12:00 during term-time only. In addition the centre offers a range of family support services including a drop-in, parent and toddler group and courses for parents. It operates from a purpose built building, forming part of a 'Healthy Living

Centre' situated close to Valley Park in Croydon. The centre serves the local area.

There are currently 21 children aged 0-5 years on roll in the nursery and 11 children aged 2-5 on roll in the preschool. Of these, 7 children within the preschool and 3 children in the nursery receive funding for nursery education. The centre supports children who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 4 permanent members of staff who work in the nursery, and 2 in the preschool, plus the centre manager and deputy manager. Of these, 6 members of staff have relevant childcare qualifications and 2 are working towards qualifications. The setting has the support of a teacher advisor employed by the local authority through the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children throughout the centre are protected from infection because practitioners follow appropriate health and hygiene procedures, such as thoroughly cleaning tables and chairs after meals and wearing aprons and gloves when they change nappies. Children learn to understand simple good hygiene practices when they wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet. A plentiful supply of paper towels and liquid soap helps reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

Children benefit from nutritious, freshly prepared meals and snacks that meet their individual dietary requirements. They begin to develop healthy eating practices when they enjoy eating fruit at snack time and enjoy a 'tasty pasta' for their lunch. Older children and those in the preschool have access to drinks at the 'snack bar' throughout the day, and confidently pour their own water whenever they are thirsty.

Children are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because there is always a member of staff on duty with a first aid certificate who can respond appropriately to minor injuries. Staff make sure medicine is only given with parents' written consent, which ensures they are acting according to their wishes. However, the system for recording the administration of medicine does not clearly show which member of staff gave the medicine. In addition, parents are not asked to sign the record form at the end of the day, so it is not clear whether they have been told that the medicine has been given as requested.

Children throughout the centre take part in regular vigorous activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. All children play outside every day. They practise physical skills as they negotiate the climbing frame, balance over logs, kick balls or run around freely. This helps them develop control over their bodies and supports their physical development well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and welcoming environment that is maintained to a high standard. Space in all areas is well organised so that children have room to play and can easily access toys and resources, which helps create a stimulating play environment. Children use a good variety of play materials, which are kept clean, regularly checked for wear and tear and replaced as needed. Toys in each room are suitable for the age and stage of the children cared for, which helps ensure they can play safely.

Children's risk of accident injury is minimised because staff follow effective procedures to identify, monitor and address any potential hazards, for instance, they check the outdoor area every day before using it. Accident reports are used well to identify any recurring problem areas and take action to reduce these. Excellent security measures within the building ensure no-one can enter or leave unsupervised.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because key staff have received child protection training and are able to support and advise others. This means staff know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children throughout the centre have good relationships with consistent staff, which helps them settle quickly and grow in confidence. Babies and toddlers receive lots of cuddles and attention from staff, and benefit from routines that are consistent with their experiences at home. They show fascination when staff blow bubbles in the air, and enjoy exploring sand, pasta or dough. Staff spend time talking and playing with the children. They support the development of children's communication skills through stories and songs and by questioning and listening to what children have to say. Staff make use of the Birth to three matters framework to plan activities for all children under 3 years old, and are developing systems for further building on children's needs and interests. This helps younger children experience a broad curriculum that is appropriate to their stage of development.

Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Staff delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum in both the nursery and the preschool have a sound understanding of the expectations for children's learning. However, the programme for children attending the preschool does not offer as wide a variety of first hand, active experiences as the nursery. Children enjoy the activities provided in the preschool, but planning does not always include learning intentions for all of the activities that are routinely offered, such as the role play area or water tray, so it is not always clear what it is hoped children will learn from them. Nursery staff have worked closely with the early years teacher and devised a system for planning that

ensures children are able to engage in a broad range of activities, make choices and follow their interests. Activities that the group enjoy are developed and extended. However, although staff in both provisions make regular observations of children's progress, they do not yet effectively use these to identify the next steps for individual children's learning in either the preschool or the nursery. Consequently activities do not necessarily build on what children already know and can do in order to fully extend children's learning.

Children come into both the nursery and preschool confidently and settle quickly. They show good levels of initiative and are eager to join in with activities. Children are keen to communicate and use language well to start conversations with their friends or express their views. Children in both settings start to recognise their name when they find the right card to show that they are present today. In the nursery, children begin to write and make marks for different purposes when they prepare a shopping list for their trip to the supermarket or spend time in the role play 'Post Office'. In the preschool, children enjoy using their imaginations to make tea in the home corner or move around the room like a dog, but opportunities to practise writing skills through activities such as role play are less well developed.

Children in the nursery show an interest in numbers, confidently counting to 10 as they jump from one foam numeral to the next; in the preschool, children count how many children are present today and use their fingers to work out how many 'fat sausages' are left when 2 are taken away. Children attending both settings enjoy exploring and investigating in the water tray, pouring water through funnels or watching a water wheel spin. Staff in the nursery make good use of spontaneous events, such as finding a ladybird in the garden, to encourage children to ask questions and find out about the natural world. Excellent planning for the outdoor environment in the nursery means children enjoy outdoor experiences across all areas of learning, however, the range of activities for preschool children outdoors is more limited.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children show high levels of independence throughout the setting. As soon as they are able, children select their own resources, take responsibility for washing their hands and managing their own shoes and coats, and help tidy up and clear away. Children in the preschool and nursery confidently pour their own drinks, and nursery children help themselves to second helpings at meal times and scrape their own plate when they have finished.

All children are welcomed into the setting and highly valued as individuals. The centre's strong links with parents, the local community and other professionals ensures that all children receive appropriate support for their individual needs. Children develop a positive view of the wider community when they play with a wide range of resources that reflect diversity and make dragons or taste food to celebrate Chinese New Year. Staff set consistent boundaries which help children become aware of expectations and begin to learn to play harmoniously together. Children

become aware of right and wrong when they are reminded to 'be nice' and say sorry when they have hurt someone. This approach ensures children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is outstanding, and is a key focus of the centre's work. The excellent relationships between staff and parents contribute significantly to children's well-being. Parents' views about their child's needs are actively sought both before children start and at regular intervals throughout their time at the centre. Parents receive a warm, friendly welcome and feel comfortable to regularly spend a relaxed half-hour at the end of the day with their child and staff in the centre, exchanging information and discussing their progress. This helps ensure children experience consistent care and keeps parents very well informed. In addition, the centre provides a range of additional services for families that offer a high level of support to parents in line with their individual needs and circumstances. Children also benefit greatly from their parents' involvement in projects such as the development of the garden area. Both of these things contribute to children's overall good health, development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by suitably qualified and appropriately vetted staff due to effective recruitment procedures. Staff have a secure understanding of child development which helps them meet children's individual needs, and a consistent staff team ensures that children are cared for by staff that they know well. Staff have clear responsibilities and work together well as a team.

All required records that contribute to children's health, safety and well-being are in place. However, although children are marked in on a whiteboard, the written attendance register for the preschool is not filled in until the end of the session and does not include the times children arrive and leave. This means a record of who was present would not be readily available in an emergency. Policies and procedures generally work well in practice, as there are effective procedures for keeping staff up-to-date and informed through meetings and supervision. The complaints procedure has not yet been updated in line with new legislation.

The leadership and management of the nursery education provision is good overall. The centre manager provides a clear ethos for the setting and demonstrates a good understanding of the provision's strengths and areas that need improvement. A number of systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the provision, such as parents' feedback questionnaires, have already been established, and others are in the process of development. Management and staff all show a strong commitment to continual development and improvement. This helps ensure that the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.

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 good. 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 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):

- make sure medication records clearly show who administered the medicine, and include parents' signatures to confirm they have been informed that it has been given as requested
- update complaints procedures in line with new legislation
- make sure attendance records for the preschool include times of arrival and departure, and are in a format that would be readily accessible in the event of an emergency

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):

- develop the programme provided in the preschool so that children are involved in a wider variety of first hand experiences across all areas of learning
- develop the system for making observations of children's progress, so that individual next steps for children's learning that link to the stepping stones are clearly identified and are used when planning activities

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