



Middleton Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY313137
Inspection date	13 June 2006
Inspector	Ingrid Pine
Setting Address	Middleton Primary School, Middleton Park Avenue, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS10 4HU
Telephone number	0113 271 4706
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Registered person	Early Years Service
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Middleton Children's Centre is accommodated in an annexe within Middleton Primary School and has been registered to provide full day care since 2005. There is an outside area available which is suitable for outdoor play.

The provision serves the local community and surrounding areas. It is registered to care for 48 children from three to five years of age. There are 73 children on roll all of whom receive funding for nursery education. Children come for a variety of sessions.

The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and welcomes children who speak English as an additional language.

The provision opens five days a week, all year round. Sessions are from 08.00 until 18.00.

There are seven staff working with the children, including the manager and a part-time early years teacher. All staff are suitably qualified.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff are proactive in helping children to gain a very good understanding of hygiene. They reinforce good practice and encourage them to become proficient in their own personal routines through discussion, posters and topics. There are very good standards of hygiene in place throughout the nursery and staff are good role models. There is a comprehensive written sickness policy in place which is discussed and understood by parents. They respect and adhere to this policy and keep their children away when they are ill helping to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. However, both staff and children have to share the school's hygiene suite and this poses a possible risk of cross contamination.

Children thoroughly enjoy well-balanced meals which are provided by the school canteen. The manager of the setting is proactive in vetting menus to ensure that the children have healthy options. Fresh fruit, vegetables and milk are provided at snack time and children freely access their own water from a drinks machine. Children demonstrate very good social skills as they sit together to eat meals and snacks and they are able to talk knowledgably about why healthy food is good for them.

Children develop their physical skills well. They enjoy regular daily outdoor play which contributes to their overall good health. They manoeuvre wheeled toys, such as trikes around the playground with confidence and control. They are adept at using small equipment. For example, they are able to use knives and forks confidently at meal times and are competent with scissors, paintbrushes and mark making equipment. A music and dance area ensures that children can have extra opportunities to exercise their bodies indoors and they eagerly join in exciting and fun activities run by experienced and enthusiastic staff.

All children in the setting are over three years old and rarely need to sleep. However, there are excellent quiet areas if they wish to rest during the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment which is in a good state of repair and decoration. Children's work is used to make the setting attractive. They

are very proud of their achievements and eagerly show visitors their pictures and creations. The standard of security is high and children are kept safe because staff are vigilant both indoors and outdoors. There is a security buzzer and high handles on the outside door. Most children attend for sessional care and arrive and depart together. A member of staff is always present in the entrance to ensure that children do not leave the premises without their parents. Throughout the nursery children learn to keep themselves safe because staff talk to them about its importance. For example, they regularly remind children to tidy up their toys and keep to the proper zones when riding bikes. They are very aware of keeping safe in the sun and know that they must always wear hats and sun cream when outside in hot weather. The fire drill procedure is governed by the school site and fire drills do not always occur when all children are present. The manager is therefore reviewing the evacuation procedure to ensure that all children within the nursery setting experience fire evacuation drills.

All resources are in excellent condition, safe and appropriate for children. Children can easily and safely, independently access all resources as they are stored in child height furniture and are well labelled. Staff's physical health is also safeguarded, as there are suitable chairs for adults so that they can work with the children comfortably.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow with any concerns. They have all attended relevant training and there is a designated person in charge of child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are confident and have a high level of self-esteem. They are clearly happy and have warm, caring relationships with the members of staff. Children show high levels of interest in what they do because they are provided with a very good range of interesting, challenging activities which contribute well to their development. All members of staff are involved in the planning, overviewed by the qualified teacher and the centre manager. Key persons use their knowledge of children's achievements and needs to plan and organise a programme of activities that support their development and learning and encourage children to use what they know and to learn more. Consistent support and meaningful praise from members of staff, ensure children become increasingly independent. For example, children are encouraged to persevere in cutting out their own wings for their models when making butterflies. Children play with purpose using everyday experiences to extend their knowledge. For example, a group of children in the construction area build a structure, working to a plan. They then measure the finished article and are encouraged to discuss and write down their findings.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have very positive relationships with the children. They have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and have well documented, easily understood planning in place. Good evaluation of the

children's individual progress enables staff to provide activities and interests that make their learning fun, exciting and appropriate. For example, a glass tank containing live tadpoles is the focal point for a topic on the life cycle of a frog. Children eagerly monitor and discuss their progress every day with each other and members of staff. They are very excited when they discover that the tadpoles have grown legs. Other activities throughout the day reinforce their learning as they sing songs, draw and paint pictures and recreate models relating to this central topic.

Children have a very high level of self-confidence. They leave their carers with ease and settle in well. They are curious and introduce both themselves and their friends to visitors within the setting. For example, children want to know why an inspector is in the nursery and what she is doing. They introduce their friends to the inspector and chat easily about their own experiences. They cope well with their own personal routines, such as going to the toilet and choosing their own activities. Children move confidently from indoors to outdoors. They know the rules for play and routinely ask if there is room for them outside before putting on their hats and asking for sun cream to be applied. They particularly enjoy snack and meal times, sitting around a well laid out table. They confidently help themselves to their own milk, water and fruit.

Children are eager to share their experiences with adults and their peers. They confidently engage adults in their play. For example, they take the inspector on the bus with them to work and invite her into the book corner to read their favourite stories. Members of staff are very aware of the level of some children's language development. They are extremely proactive in introducing activities that develop and promote this development. For example, they organise specific group work and one to one sessions to meet children's individual needs as well as ensuring that communication and conversation is constantly encouraged and supported. Attractive and interesting books encourage children to use the book corner for impromptu story times on their own or in small groups. They understand how to respect books and are very adept at recalling their favourites. For example, young children eagerly retell the story of the hungry caterpillar. They confidently ask for reassurance and explanations when they have forgotten some of the less familiar items, such as salami and watermelon. Older children confidently discuss texture when playing in the dough. For example, they ask an adult to feel how soft or rough it is and others describe how stretchy it is.

Children are developing good counting skills and use their mathematical skills to readily solve problems in their daily play. For example, younger children can sort small plastic teddies by number, size and colour. Older children are developing an understanding of space, shape and measure within the construction area as they discuss which blocks to use to make a large rectangular structure. Staff promote children's understanding of number through simple techniques such as providing a template with foot prints on it at the entrance to the indoor physical activity area. Children take their shoes off when entering this area and place them on the template. When the template is full, children know that the activity is full. There is a system of using aprons so that children can self-regulate the numbers playing in a specific area. For example, a child explains that there can only be four children at the dough table because there are only four aprons.

Exciting, relevant topics enhance the children's awareness of nature and the world

around them. As well as the topic on the life cycle of a frog, they have recently grown sunflower seeds and children proudly show their plants and examples of their related work to the inspector. Staff promote a high level of respect for one another and children's awareness of the wider diverse world is developing. Staff are introducing activities on other cultures and encouraging children to look at simple books about different faiths. Children become familiar with how things work as they play with the oven alongside the dough and make models in the craft area. They explain that you must not touch the oven as it is hot and that you cannot paint a model until the glue is dry. They also understand how to use tape recorders for listening to story tapes.

Children have many opportunities to create models and paint pictures. They use their imagination well and are often seen wearing dressing up clothes to enhance their play both in the home corner and other areas of the nursery. For example, children wearing hats use the settee in the book area as a bus to go to work, transporting a bag full of small teddies which they use to represent money. They are beginning to create their own music in well resourced areas both indoors and outdoors and thoroughly enjoy singing songs and nursery rhymes in their groups.

Children move confidently in a number of interesting ways as they practise their physical skills in the playground and in a specialist movement area inside. They carefully transfer water from a jug to a container in the water play and manipulate objects with good control. For example, they spread glue precisely and use their knives and forks well at meal times.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected by staff who are very good role models. They respond positively to the staff members' clear guidance and receive much praise and encouragement. Children are given responsibility for making their own choices and decisions which enables them to be competent, independent learners and develop individually at their own pace. They show high levels of positive behaviour, sharing and cooperating with each other.

The setting has a comprehensive inclusion policy and there is good support for children with learning difficulties. Good baseline assessments by a key person ensure that all children's individual needs are well met. Staff arrange a home visit so that they are aware of children's requirements and preferences.

Sound, trusting relationships are being fostered with parents and carers. They feel that they are welcome in the setting and mostly included in their children's development. Some parents feel confident enough to ask questions regarding their children's progress and learning and staff are aware of the need to extend their interest in this, as well as their participation in other areas of the nursery. However, space constraints within the setting currently makes the partnership with parents less effective. This has been identified by staff as an area for further development as the setting is very committed to a policy of parental inclusion and partnership.

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

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the nursery are good and contribute positively to children's progress towards the early learning goals. Management staff hold relevant qualifications and are very experienced. Clear, sound recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. The setting has an effective management structure and all staff are valued and treated as equal members of the team. Roles and responsibilities are shared to ensure that staff develop their confidence and experience. Members of the team feel that they are valued and involved in the decision making of the setting, ensuring that children's learning is fostered. There are good systems in place to evaluate and monitor staff performance and development, and staff receive regular individual assessments and appraisals. The managers and staff team are committed to a continual improvement within the setting and meet regularly to evaluate the effects of their working practice on children's development.

Space is very well organised. Good quality furniture and equipment is used to create interesting play areas for both boisterous and quiet, concentrated play. Children develop their independence as they can easily access a broad range of resources and move freely both indoors and outdoors.

Comprehensive documentation ensures the safe management and care of the children within the setting. It is very well organised, up to date and readily available. Detailed policies and procedures are in place and these are shared with parents.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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):

- ensure shared use of the hygiene suite does not pose a risk to children's health.

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):

- ensure there are more opportunities for parents to learn and understand about their children's assessment and development, and participate more fully in their learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk