



John Smith Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119578
Inspection date	15 June 2006
Inspector	Margaret Hughes / Vivienne Rose
Setting Address	90 Stepney Way, London, E1 2EN
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Registered person	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
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?

The John Smith Children's Centre is directly managed by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Early Years Department. It is situated in Stepney close to the Whitechapel underground station and main bus routes.

The premises are purpose built and are divided into three group rooms for the early years provision. The centre also offers family and community support in a designated area of the building . There are separate enclosed outdoor play areas for early years

and community support sections. A maximum of 22 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round. The community support service operates five days a week, offering a variety of two hour drop ins.

There are currently 22 children from 18 months to three and a half years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for early education. Children who attend the nursery come from all areas of Tower Hamlets, though primarily they come from the immediate area, and all places are allocated by an admissions panel. The nursery currently supports up to nine children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a large number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 17 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. Of these, 10 work within the nursery, two whom are a job share. The setting receives the support of a part-time nursery teacher. The setting also receives regular support from speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and currently a support teacher for children with visual impairment is working with the setting.

The community support section has a staff of four, three of whom are qualified in early years, and one in community support. This service is open to the whole community on all days, through the drop-ins, and toy library and workshop services. Parents and carers attending the setting can receive support and advice from dieticians, public health, and speech and language therapists. Childminders have their own drop in once a week, as do female carers, and parents and carers with children under 18 months. Bangladeshi parents who have children with disabilities have a weekly drop in which is run by advisory workers. Currently there is a weekly speech and language session. Outreach work is also being undertaken on a regular basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and welfare needs are well met. Staff have a good understanding of each child's health and medical needs and there are good procedures in place to ensure that these are appropriately met. Children with high dependency needs are well supported by trained staff. There are comprehensive procedures in place to ensure all children's needs are regularly reviewed and agreed with parents.

Children's personal needs are well met because all the staff encourage children to become independent in managing their personal routines for example, washing their hands and going to the toilet.

Children are well protected from infection and illness because staff provide a very clean well maintained environment. Children enjoy daily opportunities to take part in physical exercise outside every day. This enables children to develop their muscle

control. Children benefit from the large outdoor play area where they can play in the fresh air and use equipment such as wheeled toys to develop their physical skills. They kick balls and play on the climbing apparatus. They also have the opportunity to enjoy vigorous play where they can roll, climb and move in a variety of ways when they visit soft play area once a week at a local centre.

Children's dietary needs are well met. All the children enjoy a healthy range of cooked meals which are delivered to the centre each day. This enables children to benefit from nutritious and well- balanced meals. Children help themselves to drinks throughout the day. They have regular opportunities to choose from a variety of fruit and yoghurt to encourage them to try new foods which they may not have tried before. Staff sit with children to create a homely atmosphere. Staff are attentive to children's dietary needs and feeding requirements enabling them to support children appropriately. Children use table mats with prompts. These give the staff information about child's likes and dislikes including where they like to sit and what their favourite foods are and whether they prefer a spoon. This all contributes to the care and consideration provided for the child's needs and comfort.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are child orientated and well designed to enable children to access equipment and resources, including those with mobility difficulties. Children's safety and security is regarded as high priority. Safety precautions are taken throughout the premises as staff are vigilant in identifying potential hazards through regular risk assessments. Access to the premises is closely monitored and effective staff deployment ensures close supervision.

There is a good selection of high quality toys, resources and equipment. All play materials are stored at low level, encouraging children to select their own resources safely and independently.

Children begin to learn about safety. They learn that they must not run inside or they will hurt themselves and to place their chairs safely and so as not to cause hazards.

Children are protected from emergency situations. They regularly practice evacuations and staff have identified specific places of safety to ensure children's welfare. There are procedures in place should a child become lost or is uncollected.

Staff are vigilant about recording children's arrival however, at present records do not contain departure times.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff are aware of their responsibilities regarding child protection. Staff undertake appropriate training and are familiar with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures. This enables them to follow the relevant procedures should they have any concerns about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have good opportunities to play and learn within an imaginative, warm and happy environment. Staff clearly understand children's differing needs and level of understanding, enabling them to stimulate and plan for their needs appropriately. Children under three years benefit from staffs knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework. The children under three are confident in their relationships with staff. They have strong bonds with their key workers which gives them a good sense of well-being. Children play well together they learn to share and have respect for each others feelings. There is good interaction between all staff and the children. Staff are highly attentive to each child's needs which help them to feel settled and happy in the welcoming stimulating environment.

There are good opportunities for children to explore experiment and investigate. Children have regular opportunities to use a sensory room which helps them to be stimulated and to reach their full potential in a relaxed environment. Children explore textures as they handle a range of materials and media. They enjoy playing with sand, paint and water.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Staff plan a good range of play and learning activities. There are long, medium and short term plans to enable children to reach their full potential. Staff know the children very well which helps them to plan effectively for their next steps. There are effective systems in place and assessment records clearly show children's approach to learning and their achievements.

Staff have a good understanding of Foundation Stage and how to plan the next steps for children's learning using the stepping stones approach. Weekly planning and good interaction means that staff are able to meet the needs of children very well. Support from a peripatetic teacher and the centre's deputy co-ordinator has supported staff in developing effective planning and recording systems. These are comprehensive and easy to use. Staff plan focus activities to meet the needs of individuals which are inclusive and support the needs of all of the children attending. However, some children's records are not as up to date as others this means that not all staff are able to see children's progress as easily.

Children are beginning to listen to stories and to handle books appropriately they enjoy looking at pictures and naming the people within the pictures. Children are encouraged to develop writing skills when they write their Easter card to take home. Children benefit from access to a good writing area where they can develop skills in pencil control and to begin to understand that print carries meaning. Good labelling within the room develops children's awareness that print carries meaning, for example, labelling on chairs and name tags for coats, and a good comfortable book area which children access independently.

Children develop a positive attitude to others and a good understanding of the wider community. They have many opportunities to celebrate festivals, try food and use resources which show positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability.

Children behave well. They are given lots of praise and encouragement to support their good behaviour especially when they show care for others.

Children begin to understand what is right and wrong through consistent boundaries which are reinforced by the staff. They enjoy looking at themselves in mirrors and talking about feelings which helps them to develop their sense of self. Children show independence in their self-care, and when they choose their own activities.

They hang up their coats; take off their shoes showing skill and confidence.

Children are developing a sense of understanding of mathematical concepts for example, when they talk about big and little and they recognise the number three on their birthday cake. They learn to match the two halves of the fruit and to roll eggs down the hill to see how fast it goes.

Physical play is enjoyed by the children they show confidence when climbing and running and balancing. This supports their self-esteem and skills. They regularly take part in soft play sessions to enable them to develop their body awareness and self-confidence. Children are learning to push and pull trolleys when playing outdoors. They develop their finer skills when they thread with beads, model with dough and construct with bricks. They learn to handle tools skilfully, such as paint brushes and rollers.

Children enjoy exploring nature they learn about snails and ants and how things grow and develop in the garden. They are developing a good understanding of various cultures when they discuss and celebrate a range of religious festivals and cultural events. They explore using their senses when using the feely table and the scented water in the water tray, Children enjoy learning to understand simple technology when they make painting patterns on the computer.

Children enjoy listening to music they make their own shakers and use a wide variety of sound instruments. They learn a wide range of songs and rhymes at circle time and participate with great enthusiasm. They use their imagination in play, when they use the telephone to speak to 'mummy'. Children enjoy using paint and glue and constructing models using a variety of recycled materials which helps them to develop their own ideas and imagination. They enjoy listening to stories at circle time, joining in the story lines and communicating their feelings and enjoyment well by the use of non-verbal signs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well respected and valued by staff. Each child is regarded as an individual and staff ensure that they are aware of each child's changing and differing needs. Staff offer challenges to children and encourage their independence and choice.

Children have a highly developed sense of self-esteem. They are clearly happy within the setting and enjoy interacting with staff. They greet staff enthusiastically and some

children request their favourite activities.

Staff are aware of each child's likes and dislikes, which are recorded in 'passport books' the children enjoy looking at and recognising pictures of themselves and staff and pointing out their favourite television programme for example, 'Teletubbies'. This encourages children to feel comfortable within the setting and develops their self-confidence.

Children's personal care needs are fully addressed and supported by staff. The group is an inclusive one and staff have extensive understanding of special needs care. The centre works with external agencies, parents and carers to meet the children's differing needs appropriately. Staff use Makaton signing to communicate with children whose language skills may not be fully developed. This helps them to be fully integrated within the provision.

Children's behaviour is managed well. Staff are attentive to each child and use appropriate strategies to encourage positive behaviour for example, encouraging children to understand right from wrong and to say 'please and thank you' this helps them to understand the needs of others. Staff create a happy positive atmosphere for the children. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff are dedicated to supporting parents in the care and development of their children. Parents are welcomed into the centres, Drop-in parent groups support parents to understand their children's differing needs. Staff exchange information with parents on a daily basis through the use of home to school sheets regarding children's care and educational needs. This exchange of information helps staff to plan and to understand the child's routines. This contributes to, and strengthens the partnership between staff and parents and encourages consistency for children between home and the setting. However, at present the centre provides limited written information for parents about the services that it provides.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff work together as an extremely professional team. Many of the staff have worked together for some years; this has created a stable and committed team. The staff have a wide experience in supporting children with special educational needs. There is good staff deployment appropriate to each child's needs. Adult ratios are high with many children receiving individual attention and close supervision. Staff development is seen as a priority, enabling staff to access further training to enhance their skills and improve the quality and standards of the care and education offered.

The leadership and management are good. There are effective procedures in place for staff and student induction and staff supervision. This ensures that new staff are familiar with the settings policies and procedures and the individual needs of the children. The centre manager ensures that staff are suitably qualified and experienced and are suitable to work with children. The daily routine is organised well around the differing needs of the children. There are many opportunities for children

to participate in a good range of activities, with time set aside for children's personal needs, and mealtimes. The premises are designed to enable staff to organise free-flow activity areas within a safe secure environment.

All regulatory documentation is maintained in full. The majority of children's records are stored confidentially and are regularly reviewed and updated. However, some observations and assessments lack consistency and staff do not record children's departure times. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Additional Services.

The provision of community support is a strength of the setting. The centre offers a wide range of drop-ins and workshops for all parents and carers in the local and wider community. Staff use their childcare skills to plan a range of activities and workshops to support children's learning. Parents are encouraged to participate in the planned activities, and the confidence and skills they develop have a positive impact on their child's learning and development.

Communication with parents and carers is very good. Parents are confident in seeking support, and accept the expertise of staff in such areas as managing behaviour or speech and language development.

The diversity of the community has been supported by the provision of exclusive female carers groups, enabling Muslim carers to make use of the service, with the additional support of Bengali speaking staff. Users of the service speak highly of the centre, and spread the word throughout the community. The centre is very adult friendly, and many current users of the service now attend with their second or third child.

Detailed evaluations of the activities provided enable staff to plan future activities, that extend the learning of the children who attend. Written feedback from parents and carers influences the activities provided. Healthy eating is promoted within the centre, with children having access to organic fruit and rice cakes. This is having a positive impact on the health of parents and children who attend. Users of the service can receive support within the drop-ins, or be directed to more specialised services such as speech and language therapists, which can then be accessed at specific sessions within the centre. A key strength of the centre is its ability to reach a wide section of the community, and the impact this has on the decrease in isolation for parents and carers.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection one recommendation was raised regarding informing Ofsted of changes to the setting. This had now been addressed. The centre now has a policy to inform Ofsted of all staff changes this ensures that the welfare of children is protected.

At the last nursery education inspection two issues for consideration were raised

relating to communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. These have been addressed. The staff now specifically plan for these areas. This enables children to begin to understand and use mathematical language in every day activities to support their learning. The more able children are now given opportunities to recognise their names with and without the use of photographic prompts.

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.

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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 that attendance records are maintained to include children's departure times

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 that observation and assessment records are consistently maintained to provide a clear picture of children's developmental progress

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