



Surestart Kates Hill & Sledmere Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY314458
Inspection date	17 October 2006
Inspector	Patricia Webb
Setting Address	Selborne Road, Dudley, West Midlands, DY2 8LJ
Telephone number	01384 812440
E-mail	
Registered person	NCH
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 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?

Surestart Kates Hill and Sledmere Children's Centre has been registered since 2005. The facility operates under the governance of the NCH organisation and is sited close to the town of Dudley. The purpose-built centre offers full day care and occasional crèche facilities for children and families in the local area. There are local shops and a park in close proximity to the premises.

The main care operates from the day nursery suite with additional occasional use of the family room for small group work. The crèche runs from the drop-in room and the training room located on the first floor.

The centre is registered to provide full day care for 26 children under five years of age, of whom nine may be under two years. There are currently 24 children on roll. Of these, five children receive funding for nursery education. The crèche is registered for 10 children under eight years of

age of whom three may be under two years. The nursery is open Monday to Friday, all year round, from 08:00 to 18:00. Crèche facilities are offered as and when required to cover various adult courses offered in the centre.

The group supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs seven staff, most of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications in education and child care. Sessional crèche workers are employed as and when required and are all appropriately qualified. The setting receives support from the early years department of the local authority.

The children's centre offers additional services which include early years outreach services, a speech and language support team and community health workers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are developing a strong awareness of following a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a wide range of physical activity that promotes their overall development. Staff are extremely knowledgeable in child development and use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities that encourage young babies to develop their mobility as they sit without support, crawl and take their first tentative steps. Older children manoeuvre themselves and wheeled toys as they negotiate pathways indoors and outside. They use areas inside and outside very effectively and are careful not to encroach on others space. Excellent use is made of the outdoor play space to offer variety and challenge. For example, children follow a wandering path round the well laid out space and even young toddlers show exceptional skill as they negotiate the wooden suspension bridge with careful trepidation and take great delight in having reached the other side. Some children eagerly manoeuvre small pushchairs and bicycles across, noting how they 'bob up and down because it's wobbly!'

Children have a clear understanding of why they need to follow good personal hygiene routines. They require very few prompts from staff as they wash their hands and dispose of tissues and paper towels carefully. Children as young as 18 months eagerly access the bathroom and follow the example set by the older children. This learning is effectively reinforced through the use of photographs of individual children completing various elements of the routine and they take great delight in showing other adults where they are in the pictures. Children receive appropriate first aid because staff have current certificates and training is regularly updated and all medication is carefully administered having been authorised by parents and carers.

A varied and highly nutritious diet is enjoyed by the children. They have a choice of healthy snacks as they tuck in to fresh fruit and raw vegetables daily. Wherever possible, staff purchase organic produce to promote an awareness of healthy eating with parents. There is animated conversation and chatter over the introduction of 'red' foods related to a topic on the colour. Toddlers become engrossed in tasting the pomegranate seeds, taking time to eat them one by

one. Children talk about their favourite foods such as the strawberries and how they are soft and the red peppers are crunchy. Throughout the activity, staff remind children about how good the foods are for their health, discussing eye sight and strong teeth. They use a water dispenser appropriately particularly when they return after running round outside. Staff guide new children into the routines sensitively as they discover the freedom of access to the dispenser.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright, child-focused environment that celebrates their art and craft work and their developmental progress through displays and photographs. Their safety is given a high priority by all staff within the centre ensuring they are safe, secure and settled. Clear policies and procedures are implemented to ensure equipment and premises are well maintained. Staff are diligent in their supervision and attention to ensuring that risk assessments are effective in minimising hazards to children. For example, a detailed assessment on the outdoor play area has identified a risk from the grass bank over the 'cave' and staff increase their supervision when younger children are outside. Children enjoy easily accessing an extensive range of good quality equipment and resources which complies with British safety standards and is stored effectively to facilitate children making choices about their activity, play and learning.

Much thought has been given to the layout inside and outdoors to offer an inspiring space for children. For example, the babies and young toddlers are able to see directly into the care base for the older children and have the opportunity to have a different perspective on their world as they use the safe secure steps to see their surroundings from a raised height. Outside, the children move around with confidence and delight in secreting themselves in the 'cave' that has been created.

They are becoming aware of their own safety as older children relate the 'rules' for walking inside and tidying away toys. They know the routines for emergency evacuation and ask questions about identity labels that visitors wear knowing why they are important.

Children's welfare is consistently protected because all practitioners have a very clear understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. They are all conversant with the internal processes for reporting concerns and aware of how the setting works in partnership with NCH and various agencies within the centre to support children and their families.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely settled and happy in the centre as practitioners create a very warm, caring friendly and stimulating environment. They are committed to ensuring that children achieve effectively as they follow and expand individual children's interest and interact with them in a dynamic and enthusiastic way. Some staff also show a keen insight into knowing when to ingratiate themselves into children's activity and when to stand back and let a children take the activity off in their own direction. Staff have an excellent grounding in their knowledge of child development. For example, a young baby delights in exploring the contents of the

treasure basket and becomes absorbed in the sound shakers and the wooden pegs. The member of staff sits back and gently moves items to encourage the child to stretch a little more to reach items and develop upper body strength.

Children happily engage in a wide range of meaningful activities and experiences for sustained periods of time. They develop concentration and interest because staff use their training effectively to promote all round development according to each child's individual care plan. This results in all children's needs being very effectively met and their routines maintained. One toddler shows great prowess on the computer and staff stand back to allow opportunities for the child to take the activity further as they wish. This results in the child extending random mark-making into creating rainbows."

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. This results in children who are motivated and making sound progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Senior practitioners have a very clear knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn effectively. Consequently children receive a broad, well planned and balanced curriculum that offers excitement and stimulation. Good planning ensures that challenge for individual children is effective in progressing and extending their education, knowledge and practical skills. Learning objectives are clear and staff understand exactly what children are expected to learn. The key worker system is implemented thoroughly to offer support and positive interaction between children and the practitioners who know them well. Despite the nursery having only recently started to deliver nursery education staff work well as a team. Some staff have still to attend suitable training and this impacts slightly on the consistency of such aspects as effective questioning and understanding the need to challenge and extend children. Senior staff use displays and planning sessions to develop this and raise staff's awareness of aspects such as observation and schemas, and their use in evaluating the curriculum and progress. Baseline assessment identifies individual children's starting points and is used to prepare activities and offer support pertinent to each child's abilities and interests. On-going assessment has not yet begun as this is the first term of nursery education. However, formats are in place and staff show a keen understanding of how assessment will enable them to plan for each child's progress and target any gaps in their development.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and use a range of strategies to praise and value children's efforts. This contributes to well-developed self-esteem and children who know the boundaries. Staff act as very positive role models for the children ensuring that they explain to them why they have been praised. For example, a three-year-old is praised and thanked for being very considerate when he helps another child who wishes to perform the duty of handing out the plates that was assigned to him. Children show a high degree of independence in their personal care, accessing and engaging in purposeful activity and relating positively to their peers and adults within the setting.

Inclusion of all children is planned and carefully monitored and staff use time and resources effectively to enable all children to make progress towards their full potential.

Children are confident speakers and use language very effectively to organise their thoughts and explain what they are doing. For example, they discuss creating the rainbow pictures on the computer and also chat about the wolf in the story of Little Red Riding Hood. They access resources easily to make marks and understand that writing carries meaning as they write up their activities in 'the daily journal' as staff do, recognise their own names and are beginning to recognise others names too.

Children use a range of mathematical concepts as they weigh, measure and calculate in simple ways such as sorting the glass beads and arranging the toy cars in size order. They have measured each other and the staff and take pride in showing visitors the display of the cut outs and sizes. Mathematical language is developing as children discuss which member of staff is the tallest.

The inspired use of resources enables children to develop a keen interest in the world around them. They use digital cameras to record pictures of each other and some of the adults, knowing that they can then access them on the computer. They know why and how changes come about as they make play dough from scratch and staff explain what happens to the dry flour when water is added. When children have different fruit and vegetables for snack, staff bring out whole produce so that children can learn to identifying them in their natural state such as pineapple and peppers. They celebrate a breadth of festivals and cultures developing their understanding of the diversity of their community.

They enjoy developing their artistic talents as they engage in free painting throughout the daily routines. They explore texture, colour and shape as part of every day activity. For example they discuss the oval shape of eggs and identify the difference in texture between dry and wet sand. Imaginative play and particularly role play is well developed and children often take the lead in directing adults. For example they play out the story they read earlier and sustain the theme throughout the morning session, directing adults to play the part of the wolf and Granny from Red Riding Hood.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and their families are warmly welcomed into the setting. Staff make home visits to each family before children start and this is also being extended to families who may use the occasional crèche facilities. From these meetings, a detailed baseline assessment is completed in partnership with parents. This contributes to developing care plans that follow familiar routines closely and enable children to separate from their carers with ease. When children reach developmental milestones the care plans are updated and shared with other staff to ensure the consistent delivery of routines. Staff provide a caring atmosphere and have a high regard for the children.

Children and their families are treated with equal concern and are valued and respected. Children learn about their community through visits from services such as fire fighters and police. The diverse cultural make-up of the area is celebrated through various festivals and activities where individual skills and knowledge of staff and parents are used to ensure that children receive correct information. They access a varied range of resources that depict positive images of the different needs of others. Older children discuss the differing needs of a small figure in a

wheelchair to one using a walking frame. They show care and concern for others, demonstrated when a member of staff returns to work after a holiday and children discuss what she did and tell her about they did while she was away. This contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development being fostered effectively.

Good account is taken of any specific needs that individual children may have. The staff are committed to developing the inclusion policy positively and work with parents and other agencies to deliver consistent individual programmes. Staff bring some of their own skills such as linguistic abilities and a keen insight into caring for children with learning difficulties and disabilities, promoting opportunities for each child to achieve at their own rate. The systems for developing non-verbal communication are limited at present and hinder how communication is effective for some children with language and speech difficulties. The presence of the speech and language services on site enables staff to seek expert advice and guidance.

Children's behaviour is good because staff employ consistent positive behaviour management strategies including praise, encouragement and rewards such as stickers which the children proudly show off. Staff treat children with respect and provide good role models. This reinforces the notion of considering the impact of their actions on others and children display abilities to share, take turns and play co-operatively.

Children benefit greatly from the strong ethos within the whole of the centre to working in partnership with parents and carers and this underpins all of the work that is carried out in the setting. Parents and carers are highly valued as their children's first educators and are consulted at each stage of their children's development. Notice boards around the setting offer detailed information about various aspects of family life, courses and workshops they can attend, and routine and topics followed within the nursery. Staff keep parents well-informed about the nursery and their child's progress. They have a detailed and attractive record of their child's progress and development as staff use photographs and comments in their profiles to indicate milestones reached and activities that children have enjoyed. Parents state that they are very happy with the care that is offered for their children and are confident in approaching and discussing any aspects with staff.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good. They have received detailed information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation stage and displays help to demonstrate how their children are learning through play and experience. Part of the induction into the nursery includes opportunities for parents of children in receipt of nursery education to discuss the curriculum and the various topics their children will follow. They also discuss the stages their child is at as they enter the Foundation Stage. Plans are in place for developing the formal arrangements for feedback and updating on their child's progress. They currently have discussions with key workers and senior staff to ensure that any gaps in their child's progress can be identified and developed at an early stage.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare is effectively maintained as rigorous and robust procedures are in place for recruiting and vetting staff to ensure they are suitably qualified and experienced. All practitioners

receive an in-depth induction into the policies and procedures that govern the smooth and effective operation of the setting. This enhances children's safety, well-being and care. The management shows a strong commitment to staff training and developing skills to improve and expand the experiences and opportunities for the children's learning and development. Regular appraisals for staff keep management informed of particular skills and training needs.

The operational plan works very well in practice. The policies and procedures are implemented effectively by enthusiastic and dedicated staff who enjoy the role they play in the lives of the children in their care. The environment is inspiringly prepared. The children are cared for in groups according to their age. However, the intuitive vision of the management leads to children's development being individually assessed and indicates when they should progress to the next group for certain activities. For example, a young toddler in the baby room spots the door open to the outdoor play area. He clambers up to the top of the small flight of steps and ensures that staff know he now wishes to join the children outside. This works exceptionally well for such children allowing them the opportunity to participate in activities they enjoy whilst still having the closer support and higher ratio of staff for comfort and security. This contributes to developing children's social skills as they mix with other groups. Staff work closely as a team, interacting positively and helping children to learn.

All of the relevant legally required documentation is in place and is regularly reviewed to take account of changes to methodologies and legislation.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Staff are motivated because the organisation is strong and supportive. All practitioners within the centre have a clear vision for the delivery of a care and education programme that enhances the lives of the children and their families and endeavours to enable children to reach their full potential. Effective deployment of staff means that the ratios of adults to children is often exceeded offering opportunities for high levels of support for individual children. The centre is currently working towards a quality assurance award and all staff across all services offered are involved. This leads to a clear understanding from all staff that the care, education and welfare of the children is everyone's responsibility.

Overall, 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

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- develop the range of strategies for non-verbal communication

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 staff knowledge of the delivery of the foundation stage to promote consistency in offering children challenge and extension

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 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk