



Fircones Child Care Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	229161
Inspection date	01 December 2006
Inspector	Janet Ann Keeling
Setting Address	Firs Primary School, Dreghorn Road, Birmingham, West Midlands, B36 8LL
Telephone number	0121 749 6659
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Registered person	Fircones Child Care Centre Ltd
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?

Fircones Child Care Centre registered in 1993. It operates from a modular building within the grounds of the Firs Primary School, Birmingham. Located within easy access of main bus routes across the city. The group serves the local community and surrounding areas.

The group are registered to provide care for 22 children at any one time. There are currently 35 children from two to five years on roll. This includes a number of three and four-year-old children who are in receipt of nursery grant funding. Children can attend for a variety of sessions. The group have strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and for children who speak English as an additional language.

The group is open five days a week during school term-time only, providing full-time places, a wrap around service and morning and afternoon sessions. Sessions are between 08:30 and 15:15 each day.

There are five staff available to work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification level two or three. The setting receives support from the local authority and has been awarded a gold quality framework award.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment. They are actively and consistently learning about the importance of good hygiene practices through very well established daily routines. For example, children begin to understand why they must wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. When asked, a child said "we must wash our hands to make them clean". Children's health is further safeguarded through the staff's current knowledge of first aid and their clear awareness of how to minimise the risk of cross-infection throughout the setting.

Children have access to a wide range of activities which effectively contribute to their good health and well-being. They have good opportunities to develop their physical skills through regular access to both indoor and outdoor activities where they are encouraged and supported to develop new skills. Children are able to enjoy the fresh air as they regularly access the outdoor play area, where they enjoy the challenges of using the climbing frame and whilst learning to pedal bikes and throw and catch balls.

Children actively learn about healthy eating through regular discussion with staff and through the completion of topic work. There was enormous excitement as the children participated in an outreach session on healthy eating which was led by staff from the 'Think Tank' in Birmingham. Children are offered healthy snacks at each session, for example, a variety of fresh fruit, hot buttered toast and a choice of water, milk or fruit juice. Children are able to independently access drinking water throughout the day.

Children's health and dietary needs are competently met at all times because staff are fully aware of children's individual needs. For example, children's individual requirements are discussed fully with parents on admission, recorded and shared with all staff. Children's accident, medication and emergency consent forms are in place, however, the accident records are not fully completed and existing injuries to children are not recorded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well-organised, safe and secure environment. For example, visitors to the group are required to formally identify themselves, sign the visitors book and are accompanied at all times whilst in the setting. Children are able to move around safely and

freely as identified hazards have been minimised through the completion of risk assessments. However, the risk assessments do not demonstrate what action has been taken to minimise identified hazards in the outdoor areas and whilst on outings.

Children have access to good quality equipment and resources which are appropriate to their developmental needs and which are checked daily to ensure they are safe for the children to use. Children learn about safe practices whilst using equipment as staff gently remind the children to sit down whilst using the scissors. Children are developing a strong sense of responsibility for their own safety from an early age. For example, a pre-school child calmly explained to a younger child that they must not run in case they fall over.

Children are kept safe because staff take positive steps to promote safety within the setting and whilst on outings. Children benefit from the very experienced and caring staff who are very well informed of the groups health and safety procedures. For example, children learn about stranger danger, follow the highway code and engage in regular fire drills.

Children are very well protected from possible abuse or neglect because, the competent staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities whilst protecting children in their care. Staff are extremely well informed and very confident in following the group's child protection procedures and have a designated child protection co-ordinator who would follow through any issues of concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy, confident and actively enjoy their time in this very welcoming group. Children are eager to learn and participate enthusiastically in the outstanding range of stimulating and challenging activities. For example, children show delight as they engage in music and movement sessions, sand and water play, creative painting, story time, cooking, role-play, nature walks and visiting places of interest. Children are able to build on knowledge and skills already acquired because staff know the children very well and because staff provide a wealth of first hand learning experiences.

Children benefit from the staff's well-established knowledge and understanding of the "Birth to three matters" framework and the Foundation Stage Curriculum. For example, a flexible and child-centred approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Children's personal and social development is exceptional, children enjoy excellent relationships with both their peer group and staff, their communication skills are inspiring as they effectively engage in discussion with adults and their peers.

Children's behaviour is excellent, children are actively and consistently praised by staff for their effort and achievements. For example, children were praised for putting on their outdoor clothes in preparation for their walk to the main school hall, whilst less able children were sensitively supported to complete the task. Consequently, children's self-esteem is carefully fostered. Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff on arrival. They

speaking confidently and share their personal experiences within the group. They listen carefully to each other, they take turns and show care and concern for others.

Nursery Education

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and at times very good. Teaching effectively promotes children's learning towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. The staff are caring, patient and supportive of the children; they have high regard for the children and know them well. The staff demonstrate a very high level of commitment to their work and provide good role models for the children. The staff manage children's behaviour sensitively and consistently; they encourage children's good behaviour through regular praise and encouragement, consequently, the children's behaviour is excellent. Planning is thorough, activities are varied and learning outcomes are clearly identified. Interaction between the staff and children is extremely positive; adults encourage children's thinking, questioning and exploration. Staff observe children and assess their development, however, assessments do not demonstrate individual children's starting points in their learning.

All children have equal opportunities for learning; staff ensure that all children are able to access the full range of activities and special project work. Children make good progress as a result of the wide range of interesting and stimulating activities, and through the excellent first hand learning experiences provided by the staff. The children benefit from the staff's constructive questions which encourage them to express their feelings and develop their ideas and interests. Children learn through a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play and have excellent opportunities to use their own initiative and develop their independence. Children who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language are effectively supported in the group.

Resources are of good quality, support all areas of learning and are used effectively. The pre-school accommodation is used well to provide a secure and happy learning environment. Both resources and accommodation have a positive impact on children's learning, however, at present the book corner does not maximise children's learning and enjoyment.

Children are enthusiastic, confident and very interested in all the activities available to them. They are eager to learn and settle quickly into the group, children's relationships with adults and their peers are excellent. Children learn about their own and other cultures as they celebrate festivals throughout the year; they express their feelings and manage their self-care needs effectively. Children engage easily in conversation; during group discussion time children participate enthusiastically, they listen carefully to adults and to each other, and talk about past and present experiences. Children listen attentively at story time and many are able to recall the story line. For example, there was great excitement as the children recalled the story of 'What's the time Mr. Wolf'.

Children learn how print carries meaning. Many of the children are able to point to their labelled work on display and recognise their name cards at self-registration time, although, children are not encouraged to use their name cards to support their learning during other activities. Children access a good range of writing materials and many of the children are able to write recognisable letters, although during structured activities children are not encouraged to label

their own work. Children have open access to a good variety of books; many of them show a keen interest in books and use them independently, carefully turning the pages and discussing the illustrations with each other and staff.

Children are encouraged to use number as part of every day routine; for example, children counted how many chairs were needed at snack-time and how many children were in the line to go for a walk into the main school building. Children use mathematical language effectively whilst engaged in activities and are familiar with words to describe size, position, shape and quantity. For example, at snack-time children talked about their cups being full and empty and whilst putting up the Christmas tree they spoke about the different shapes of the tree decorations. Children can confidently name shapes such as square, triangle, circle and have opportunities to sort, match and compare objects in a variety of contexts.

Children have good access to a range of toys, resources and planned activities which promote their awareness of diversity, for example, as they enjoy celebrating different cultural festivals throughout the year such as Chinese new year, Christmas and Diwali. Children freely access a good selection of programmable toys and technical equipment which they use competently and with increasing skill. Children use the computer keyboard and mouse confidently and were supported appropriately by staff whilst using the different programmes. Children were very excited as they experimented with torches; they carefully selected the correct batteries and placed them into the torch cases, both children looked at each other in 'ore and wonder' at the bright light! Children learn about their natural environment and develop an understanding of living things, as they talk about how the weather changes, look for mini-beasts whilst on nature walks and observe seeds as they grow.

Children show good control and co-ordination as they move confidently and safely around both the indoor and outdoor areas. Children take part in regular music and movement sessions where they develop their awareness of space and others around them. They have access to an outdoor area where they are able to develop their physical skills, such as climbing, running, throwing, catching and pedalling bikes. The children use a wide range of small equipment, including scissors, paintbrushes, glue sticks, cutters and pencils which they handle with increasing control.

Children develop an awareness of healthy eating through topic work and regular discussion with adults and their peers; for example, at lunch-time children talked about their likes and dislikes of various foods, and staff explained why certain foods were healthier than others. Children use their imagination in activities such as painting, music and movement and various role-play situations. Children explore sound effectively through playing a range of musical instruments and listening to a variety of musical sounds. They enjoy singing and maintain a good sense of rhythm when joining in rhymes. There was great delight as the children sang 'Twinkle Twinkle little star' and Peter Pointer'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into the nursery and are valued and respected as individuals. Their needs are competently supported by staff who know the children very well and who respond sensitively to their individual needs. Children are fully included in all activities and

their differences are acknowledged and supported. They are able to access a good range of activities, toys and resources which actively raise their awareness of diversity and promote their understanding of others. For example, through access to role play equipment, books, posters and by welcoming visitors from the local community. Children's understanding is further promoted as they complete topic work on Chinese New Year, Diwali, Christmas, and through positive discussions with the staff. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is excellent. Children are fully aware of the group's boundaries and expectations for good behaviour, they learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children's understanding of right and wrong is further developed as they respond to gentle reminders from staff, to care for their environment, resources and each other.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The effective partnership with parents and carers contributes positively to the children's well-being within the group. Relationships between parents and staff are warm and relaxed. Children's individual care and educational needs are fully discussed with the parents before the child starts at the setting, enabling staff to be fully aware of their needs. The staff welcome informal contact with parents at the beginning and end of each session; they share information about the children's activities and achievements on a regular basis, and parents are able to view their child's development file at any time. Parents and carers have access to a range of information regarding the group, including a prospectus, current topic, daily planning and the groups policies and procedures. However, the complaints procedure has not been updated and implemented in line with the revised National Standards Guidance of October 2005.

Staff actively encourage parents to take an interest in their child's early education, through informal discussions, consultation sessions and regular newsletters. Parents feel very welcome in the group and say that staff are approachable, friendly, knowledgeable and supportive of their children's individual needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The premises are welcoming, well organised and effectively support the children's learning and enjoyment. Staff are caring, patient and fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Policies and procedures work effectively in practice to promote children's health, safety and enjoyment, and also enable children to make a positive contribution. However, the setting's recruitment and selection procedures have not been fully updated and implemented in line with the revised National Standards Guidance of October 2005. All legally required documentation is in place.

Children benefit from qualified, experienced and knowledgeable staff, who follow an effective induction programme and who are committed to on-going training and development. Staff have opportunities to reflect on their own practice through regular staff meetings and through the yearly appraisal interviews.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Managers are fully committed and effective in promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters. The staff are very enthusiastic, work cohesively as a team and are deployed effectively. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss daily issues, planning and children's development. Staff are encouraged to attend relevant training courses to further enhance their knowledge of the early years curriculum and new initiatives in childcare. Managers and staff work effectively in partnership with the local authority to monitor and evaluate the early years provision. There is a very focused commitment from managers and staff to continue to develop the early years provision.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting were asked to; develop strategies to manage children's challenging behaviour, review and update the equal opportunities policy and to coordinate information regarding children's individual needs.

Since the last inspection the setting have updated their equal opportunities policy which is now written in line with current legislation and guidance. Staff have completed further training on managing children's behaviour, consequently, children's behaviour is excellent. The setting have introduced a key worker system where all children are attached to a key worker, consequently, this ensures that children's individual needs are fully supported at all times. Therefore, as a result of the improvements made the children's safety and well-being are now further supported.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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

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 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 the accident records are fully completed and existing injuries to children are recorded
- develop the setting's risk assessment procedures to ensure they clearly demonstrate what action has been taken to minimise hazards to children whilst accessing the outdoor areas and whilst on outings
- update the complaints procedure to ensure it is written and implemented in line with the revised National Standards Guidance of October 2005
- review and update the recruitment and selection procedures to ensure they are written and implemented in line with the revised National Standards Guidance of October 2005.

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 assessment procedures to ensure they demonstrate children's starting points
- further develop the book corner in order to maximise children's learning and enjoyment.

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