



Martenscroft Nursery School and Sure Start Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY294455
Inspection date	14 November 2006
Inspector	Sarah Taylor
Setting Address	Martenscroft School, 33 Epping Street, Manchester, Lancashire, M15 6PA
Telephone number	0161 226 1266
E-mail	
Registered person	Martenscroft Early Excellence Ctre Governing Body
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Martenscroft Nursery School and Sure Start Children's Centre was registered in 2005. It operates from four rooms in a one storey renovated building on Epping Street in Hulme, Manchester. The centre serves the local area.

The centre is open five days per week all year round. Sessions in the nursery are from 07.30 to 17.30 and in the out of school club from 15.00 to 17.30. Crèche opening times are variable in line with training courses offered. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 55 children on roll, some of whom are in receipt of funding for nursery education.

Staff working with the children have early years qualifications and experience.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because practitioners follow highly effective procedures and practices, which meet the children's nutritional, physical and health needs. They stay healthy because practitioners are able to implement the current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines. The children benefit from premises that are very clean and welcoming. There are stringent procedures in place for general cleaning and clearing up after each session. The exceptional adult support and guidance helps children gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care. At an appropriate age, children use the child friendly bathroom to develop the routine of washing hands before handling food and after taking part in messy activities, and after toileting. They do this with little adult intervention. There is a fully stocked first aid box in place and practitioners are competent in administering first aid to ensure any children with minor injuries are treated appropriately. Children on long term medication and with additional health needs are very well catered for, and the treatment they receive is well documented. Younger children sleep in individualised cots and bring blankets from home to help them to settle.

Children are able to play outside in the secure and safe area, where they enjoy developing hand-eye co-ordination skills, building towers and balancing bars, and learning to pedal tricycles. They explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences. Practitioners' excellent understanding of each child's stage of development means the children are confident to try out new skills, ask for help when needed and set their own limits within a safe environment. Practitioners have an expert knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan interesting and stimulating activities to ensure children get the most from their outdoor play. Children move freely and confidently from the indoor to the outdoor area whenever they choose and practitioners skilfully facilitate play.

Children have the benefit of very healthy snacks and meals. The centre ensure that they offer a good variety of fruit and vegetables throughout the day. Children's health and dietary needs are successfully met as practitioners conscientiously record children's dietary needs and work closely with nutritional experts to devise individual menus catering for allergies, cultural and religious requirements. Children who experience problems with eating are skilfully and sensitively supported by practitioners. Children are able to help themselves to easily accessible drinking water or milk throughout the session. They confidently place their name label on to their drink when they are thirsty, and then, when they have finished, they throw the carton away and keep the label safe. This is done independently and with little adult guidance.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children and their parents feel very welcome and comfortable in the superbly designed and well decorated premises, which are maintained to a high standard. Rooms are maintained at the optimum temperature to ensure children's comfort. The layout of the building meets the children's needs extremely well as the areas are set out carefully, helping to promote a range

of children's skills and independence. The three main rooms are divided into areas to ensure children experience a balanced range of resources. Children can access a beautifully equipped sensory room to contribute to their development. Excellent storage, kitchen and office facilities contribute to the smooth running of the premises and the high quality care of the children.

The centre is very well equipped to promote all areas of learning. Resources are of a superior quality with many of them made from natural materials. Toys and materials are extremely well organised and very accessible to the children. They are clearly labelled, helping the children to identify resources and associate print with meaning. There are highly effective systems in place for checking resources, thereby ensuring they are safe and suitable for the children's use. Toys and equipment in the out of school room meet the children's needs. The centre invests in equipment to meet the needs of all children, such as the hydraulic table.

Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because practitioners are extremely vigilant in reducing potential hazards. Children are safeguarded as the setting is secure and entry is gained through the use of a buzzer and closed circuit television. Practitioners complete thorough risk assessments to monitor the safety of the premises and resources. There are highly effective procedures in place for resolving safety matters. Children are cared for by adults who are vetted, experienced, extremely knowledgeable and skilful.

Children are well protected as practitioners have expert knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidance, and are clear that their main concern is the welfare of each child. They have a wealth of experience of dealing with concerns, monitoring children and making appropriate referrals to other agencies. The managers work closely with parents to ensure that vulnerable children receive the best care possible.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel safe, secure and happy in the centre. There are wonderful relationships throughout the setting producing a harmonious and happy environment where the children thrive. This increases the children's sense of trust and helps them develop a strong sense of self. High quality adult-child interactions helps the children's confidence and self-esteem.

Practitioners confidently follow the 'Birth to three matters' guidance and the Foundation Stage curriculum to provide the children with high quality care and education. Practitioners are very sensitive towards children's needs and recognise the uniqueness of each child. There are highly effective planning and assessment systems in place to ensure the learning programme matches the needs of the individual children. The children experience highly stimulating activities that are skilfully planned to be suitable for their age and interest levels.

Young children become engrossed in sensory play with different materials, such as fabric, plastics, wood, metal, tubes and boxes. They are animated and enthusiastic in their play, and giggle and squeal with enjoyment as they enjoy the delights of the sensory room and tickling each other with a feather duster.

Young children are extremely well supported in their development and are challenged to try something new. For example, climbing up the ramp to the tunnel. Imaginative play is encouraged by the practitioners and the children giggle as they talk on the telephones or make food in the play kitchen. Sensory experiences are a natural part of the day and practitioners plan exciting and valuable experiences indoors and out of doors to enhance learning in this area. For example, children plant herbs in the sensory garden and use the treasure baskets. They are excited when it rains and enjoy putting on wellington boots and using umbrellas to splash in the puddles with paint and bubbles. Practitioners are flexible and spontaneous and take full advantage of all opportunities for development to ensure that children get the most from their time at the centre. For example, they provide children with torches so that they can play out at dusk, and show them how to make patterns in the sky. Children enjoy taking photographs using either disposable or digital cameras. They learn to load the photographs onto the computer. They thoroughly enjoy playing on the soft play equipment in the hall area and enjoy balancing, climbing and rocking with little support.

Nursery Education.

Children enthusiastically enjoy all that they do and are completely engaged at all times. There is a wealth of opportunities for independent learning throughout the sessions. For example, children can choose from a range of high quality equipment like construction toys, role play and imaginative toys, computers, books, writing, art and craft equipment and musical instruments.

Children show a high level of independence as they put on their coats, help themselves to drinks and use the toilets with no adult support. During the activities, the level of concentration demonstrated is excellent and this continues when the group begin to tidy up. The behaviour displayed is exemplary. Children talk about their feelings and express how they feel. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent due to the hard work that the practitioners put into meeting the needs of the children.

Children are beginning to recognise their own name and talk about the initial letters of their name or of different words. There is a well stocked mark making area where children sit independently writing notes and lists. The role play area is an important part of the room where children can develop their literacy and mathematical skills, and enjoy innovative ideas, such as writing tickets to go on holiday and packing for their trip. Books are shared with practitioners, for example, children listen to nursery rhymes like 'Doctor Foster'. Children confidently use books throughout the session. Practitioners provide excellent support for individuals, including children for whom English is an additional language. They give one to one support when required, enabling all children to be involved and included in activities provided. The inclusion worker also works with certain children, and the practitioners ensure that they co-ordinate their planning to ensure that it supports the needs of individual children.

Children show confidence as they count the number of children, or the number of dough ducks, and the practitioner skilfully uses the number rhyme about ducks to reinforce number skills. This is clearly traceable to the planning. Children concentrate intensely when exploring capacity and enjoy pouring from one container to another. They competently match shapes and colours when tidying up the tools and equipment.

Children learn to explore and investigate and look at changes as they plant seeds. They develop a clear sense of time as they discuss what they have been doing at home or where they have been on holiday.

The children show an excellent awareness of space as they negotiate the outdoor area using wheeled vehicles or push along toys. They balance and climb and have opportunities to develop physically through the outdoor and indoor activities on offer. They have the benefit of a wide range of tools including pencils, crayons, paint, shakers, glue spreaders and dough cutters, and this enables them to develop their physical skills.

Children express their own ideas confidently in creative work using a variety of media. For example, robins and stick puppets using collage techniques. Children have excellent chances to explore sound through the use of a range of instruments. They enjoy various instruments for free expression and sing and clap rhythms.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Practitioners have an excellent knowledge of the early learning goals which is reflected in their planning and teaching. Their skilful approach in promoting positive relationships and developing children's self-esteem plays a major part in facilitating children's rapid progress in all areas of learning. Practitioners use innovative strategies to develop children's self-confidence. Throughout the session, children's efforts and achievements are celebrated as they are praised continually.

Practitioners have a clear knowledge of children's capabilities. They establish children's starting points at the beginning of the Foundation Stage and build on this knowledge. Ongoing, thorough observation and assessment of children's learning is effectively used to inform planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are expertly cared for by practitioners who work exceptionally well with parents to meet children's individual needs and ensure they are included fully in the life of the setting. Practitioners demonstrate a very secure awareness of equal opportunities and special needs ensuring children's individual needs are met and they feel included. All children are sincerely and warmly welcomed into the centre giving them a real sense of belonging. Their work is beautifully displayed around the room promoting their self-esteem and respect for others.

Children are learning to work harmoniously with others as practitioners effectively support them in sharing and taking turns. Children are learning to make decisions as they choose from a wide, balanced range of resources. These resources reflect equal opportunities, successfully helping children to become aware of a wider society. For example, through the range of dressing up clothes, small world toys, books and instruments. There are positive images displayed around the centre and the setting actively and successfully celebrates the backgrounds of the children and of the local community. Links are developed with the local high school and older children come to the setting to help the younger children with activities, such as sports day. This further fosters a sense of community.

Children are extremely well behaved. They respond well to the positive behaviour management strategies employed by the practitioners. Practitioners are exemplary role models who remain calm and positive at all times and use consistent strategies to promote acceptable behaviour. The centre has a set of 'golden rules' that children have contributed to. These form the basis of the management of behaviour and children can earn certificates for being well behaved as well as for other achievements. This approach raises their self-esteem.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive a high level of quality information about the educational provision through the information boards in each room and regular newsletters. They are informed of their children's progress as they are free to see their child's record of achievement folder and talk to practitioners. Practitioners write comprehensive reports every six months and parents are invited to attend parents evenings, open mornings and afternoons. Parents are effectively involved in their children's learning as they enjoy activities suggested in the letters sent home, detailing the theme of the pre-school and suggesting further activities to complete at home. Parents are further involved through participating in activities, such as planting in the garden and festival celebrations. There is also a learning resource centre where parents can use the computers and borrow equipment, such as story sacks. They can also access the stay and play sessions.

This high quality partnership is further reinforced as practitioners run workshops for parents, for example, on behaviour management. Practitioners make good use of information requested on admission to meet children's care needs and, as part of the gradual admission policy, hold regular meetings with parents as their child is being settled into the centre. The centre see the partnership with parents and carers as central to the development of the child and do what they can to support children and their families. Parental feedback is very positive and comments, such as 'thank you for helping our child through her first years' and, 'thank you for all your help and support' show the appreciation felt by parents.

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

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation. Practitioners have a good understanding of the philosophy of the centre and are extremely hardworking and diligent, displaying a high regard for the well-being of all children and a passion for the role that they do. They are extremely conscientious and thorough in implementing policies and procedures to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. The senior practitioners are extremely knowledgeable and have worked hard together to develop a toolkit for use alongside the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enhance the good practice already demonstrated at the centre. They share their knowledge and experience by providing training to other settings.

The indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. The children are well protected and cared for by practitioners with an excellent knowledge and understanding of child development and child protection. Records are meticulously maintained, remain confidential and are easily accessible. A comprehensive operational plan ensures

practitioners are very clear about their roles and responsibilities, enabling them to provide the children with a secure environment and continuity of care.

The leadership and management is outstanding. Children benefit from the excellent management of the centre. Practitioners receive clear and positive direction from the managers. Practitioners roles are well defined and they work effectively together to promote learning. Thorough and effective monitoring and assessment procedures are in place which ensure high quality provision. The managers have an excellent awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting through a detailed and ongoing appraisal system. There is a high level of commitment to improvement, reflected in a strong emphasis on practitioner's development. This has a positive impact on the quality of children's learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the 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 care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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