



St Vincent Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511070
Inspection date	20 October 2006
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Registered person	YMCA Fairthorne Group
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?

St Vincent Early Years Centre provides sessional and full day care at premises in the grounds of St Vincent College, Gosport. It opened in 2000 and serves the local community. The Centre is managed and supported by the Children's Work Director of South East Hampshire Y.M.C.A. which is a charitable based organisation.

The Centre is registered to provide full day care for 53 children from birth to under five years, no more than 15 of these children may be under two years of age. The out of school playscheme is registered to provide care for 52 children aged from four years to under eight years at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 all year round. Children may attend for the full day, or for sessional care. All children have access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

There are currently 74 children from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children attend a variety of sessions. The Centre supports children with learning difficulties, disabilities and who speak English as a second language. The Centre works closely with teachers at local schools.

The Centre employs 17 full and part time staff working with the children. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The organisation provides high quality, fresh cooked food which is cooked at Fairthorne Manor and transported to the setting each day in an insulated container. Staff use probes to ensure the food is suitable for consumption, keeping the children healthy. Children learn the importance of healthy eating through detailed and animated discussion. Staff talk to the children about what they are eating and the types of food that will help them to grow and have lots of energy. The children look at different types of fruit and eagerly try new things.

Children are activity encouraged to wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet. They are learning the importance of good personal hygiene and often talk about 'washing off the germs' as they wash their hands. Stringent hygiene procedures are implemented effectively throughout the nursery. For example, thorough nappy changing procedures are in place. Staff complete in-house training which is refreshed once a year. They use disposable gloves and aprons to protect the children and themselves. Anti-bacterial sprays are used to meticulously clean the whole area after each nappy change, helping to prevent the possible spread of infection.

Children will receive appropriate treatment if an accident occurs on the premises because most members of staff hold current first aid certificates. Fully stocked first aid boxes are kept in each building, making them easily accessible in an emergency. Parents give written consent for the setting to seek emergency medical treatment or advice. Staff have an extremely clear understanding of the procedures to follow when medication is administered and if an accident occurs on the premises. The records are detailed and parents are required to sign to acknowledge they have been informed. The accident records are stored in the main office and are collated regularly, the information is used as part of the risk assessment to identify areas of concern, helping to provide a safe and healthy environment for the children.

Children have ample opportunities to develop their large muscle skills during the day. They confidently use the outdoor climbing frames and slides. There is a wide variety of climbing apparatus which caters for the age and stage of all children who attend. Children are developing good hand to eye co-ordination as they throw and catch balls. They make use of the outside play area daily, children are able to run around, ride wheeled toys and play games, while reaping the benefits of the fresh air and outdoor experiences.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe through daily routines, for example, they help to sweep up spillages, such as dried pasta and tuck their chairs in when they leave a tabletop activity, preventing other children from tripping over them. The older children are able to explain what happens during a fire drill and are able to show which way they go when they are practising. Fire drills are practised monthly and are logged and evaluated, helping to improve the evacuation times and identify any potential problems.

Staff ensure the old buildings are brightly decorated and children's work is displayed around the walls, creating a vibrant environment where the children feel their efforts are valued. Children are keen to show staff and visitor's their 'work' on the walls, chatting about what they have been doing over the last few weeks. Children benefit from an extremely wide range of resources, play materials and equipment throughout the nursery. Staff ensure the resources used in each area are suitable for the age and stage of the groups of children. The equipment and resources are clean and in good condition, clear procedures are in place to ensure everything is cleaned regularly, providing a safe environment for the children.

Children are regularly monitored while they are sleeping and this is currently recorded on a wipe clean board. No permanent records of staff monitoring the children who are sleeping is in place. This could cause confusion if an incident occurred and could impact on the children's safety if it is unclear when they were last checked by staff. Clear arrival and collection procedures are in place to ensure the children are safe and protected. All staff have an extremely clear understanding of child protection procedures and are required to complete training as part of the organisations comprehensive induction programme. Staff would recognise the possible signs of abuse and would report any concerns to appropriate parties when necessary. All existing injuries are recorded and parents are required to sign the records to acknowledge the entries, keeping the children safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages in the nursery are happy and settled. Staff interact extremely well with the children throughout the nursery, making eye contact, being affectionate, offering cuddles, talking soothingly or animatedly depending on the situation, all motivating the children and encouraging their full participation in the activities provided. Children are continually praised and encouraged throughout the day. Staff recognise their efforts and comment on what they are doing. For example, a 15-month-old child came and sat next to a member of staff and a child just under one year. The 15-month-old gently stroked the baby's arms and head saying 'ahhh'. The member of staff was very quick to praise the child for being gentle. The child smiled and wandered off to play with something else. This reinforces positive behaviour and builds the children's self-esteem effectively. Children in all areas of the nursery enjoy an extensive range of activities, from sensory sessions in the baby room to musical movement and dancing in the toddler room. Staff have a clear understanding of the Birth to Three Matters Framework and plan stimulating child-led activities to meet the needs of the children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The whole staff team have an extremely good understanding of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones. This knowledge enables them to effectively observe the children's progress and identify their next steps. They use the information gathered to inform the curriculum planning, ensuring children's individual needs are being met, allowing them to make good progress towards the early learning goals, reaching their full potential in all six areas of learning. The staff team are so enthusiastic about everything they do that the children are motivated and show an interest in everything provided. Children are keen and eager to try new activities and respond with confidence to new experiences. For example, trying new foods, suggesting ideas and participating fully in all the activities. Children take part in one to one activities, small and large groups, learning to work together. Staff ask open ended questions and introduce new words whenever possible, increasing and extending the children's vocabulary effectively. They have a clear understanding of the children's developmental needs and know when to step in and help to direct the play and when to stand back, enabling the children to extend and expand on their own ideas, developing their imaginations and allowing them to fully express themselves through play experiences.

Children talk confidently in group situations and share their ideas openly. For example, during a group activity the children all choose a 'buddy' from a wide selection of small cuddly toys. the children name them and then sing a welcome song, this encourages the children to talk in the group developing their self-esteem and spoken language well. Children are beginning to link sounds to letters during phonics work and as they recognise their names throughout the session. They have ample opportunities to develop their emergent writing skills as they mark-make at every opportunity and for a variety of purposes. Children are able to count up to and above 19 as they count the days of the month. They also use the number line to count, helping with their number recognition. Children match and sort items during the day and staff help them to think of other groups, for example, only picking blue or the biggest. They are beginning to recognise simple patterns and recreate them accurately. Children use mathematical language throughout the day to describe size, position, quantity and shape.

Children use the settings computer with ease, some are able to choose and start programmes, others are just beginning to master the control of the mouse. Staff are skilled at knowing when the children can manage, encouraging them to persevere and when to support them before they become frustrated. This nurtures the children's learning and builds their confidence effectively. Children share and take turns extremely well and understand the group rules, helping them to work together in small and large groups. Although when working in large groups children often forget about each others needs as they scramble to get to the front, or push and nudge each other before settling down to the activity. Children have access to a very broad selection of art and craft materials and are encouraged to use their imaginations well. Children develop their freedom of choice as they choose the materials and objects for their art work. Staff support the children effectively and offer ideas such as, 'Do you think it will stick better with glue or paint?' This encourages the children to think about what they are doing but the staff don't interfere with their ideas, enabling the children to express themselves freely.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit because staff have an exceptionally clear understanding of equal opportunities and spend a great deal of time getting to know the children and their families. For example, talking about the parents who are at college today, or knowing which ones work or are at home with siblings. This helps the children to feel valued and they settle into the group well, building strong relationships. Staff ask about the children's individual likes and dislikes and plan activities to help settle them into the nursery. Children have equal access to all the activities and staff time and attention. They are beginning to show consideration for others, passing their cartons of milk to them, helping each other to pick up a puzzle that fell on the floor and showing each other how to ride the scooters outside. Children are beginning to learn about the world around them through topics, themes, resources and activities about other cultures and beliefs. They have access to an extensive range of multi-cultural resources throughout the nursery and they see positive images around the walls. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The special needs co-ordinator has many years experience in this role and has an exceptionally clear understanding of the Code of Practice and her responsibilities. She regularly attends a wide range of training to ensure her practice is up-to-date and new initiatives are implemented as soon as she has cascaded the information to staff. The whole staff team implement strategies to support all the children who attend, making it a positive and stimulating environment for everyone. The staff liaise closely with the parents and if necessary other agencies to ensure the children's needs are being met in the best possible way. Children of all ages behave exceptionally well because the clear rules and boundaries are implemented consistently across the setting. Children know exactly what is expected of them and staff continually recognise and praise the children's efforts, focusing on the positive behaviour. Children are polite and well-mannered. Staff gently remind the youngest children to say 'please' and 'thank you' at appropriate times, and praise them when they remember on their own. One of the deputy managers is the designated behaviour manager. She has attended an extensive range of training courses and workshops to develop her skills and enable her to support the staff and parents with more challenging children. Staff work closely with the parents to ensure behaviour management in the setting is consistent with the parents approach at home, offering advice and support for the families, for the benefit of the children. Staff are positive role models and treat the children with respect and affection, earning their trust and building strong relationships. This ensures the children feel valued and helps to develop a real sense of belonging.

Parents receive detailed written information about their children's time in the setting. The staff keep 'special books' for each child, which covers their entire time in the setting, from first starting until they leave to go to school. The books include samples of the children's work, accompanied by reader friendly observations and photographs. The parents also have access to their children's records, covering the Birth to Three Matters Framework and the Foundation Stage. The records are transferred as the children move up the age groups through the nursery, ensuring their individual needs are being met. Parents of the youngest children receive a written daily report covering their diet, sleep routines, nappies, activities and general well-being throughout the day, helping to keep them fully informed. Parents are able to stay as long as

they want on arrival and can come early to collect their children and spend time in the setting, strengthening the already strong relationships.

The partnership with parents of children who receive funding for early education is outstanding. Parents receive a comprehensive prospectus, which includes the organisations aims and the nursery's objectives. The information includes the curriculum and the six areas of learning, giving the parents a clear insight into what their children will be doing during their time in the nursery. The parents are able to talk to staff at any time and the curriculum for each week is clearly displayed in the pre-school room. Parents are extremely well informed about their children's progress, key workers talk to the parents informally whenever possible and parents know they have access to their children's records on request. Parents have the opportunity to stay during sessions, speak to the key workers at anytime and make written contributions to their children's records if they wish. Children benefit greatly from the strong and effective links with home throughout their time in the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are protected because the organisation has stringent and robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place, which are implemented effectively. New staff are strongly supported and complete an in depth induction programme as well as in-house training to ensure they are fully aware of their personal role and responsibilities. The organisation and the staff of the nursery have a very clear understanding of the regulations and the inspection process and most of the required paperwork and documentation is maintained to a high standard and is readily available for inspection at any time.

Staff deployment is excellent providing high quality support and supervision for all the children across the whole nursery. The staff are able to cover in other rooms if necessary because systems and procedures are consistent across the age groups, enabling the children to get to know all of the staff, making transition into the next age groups easier, helping children to settle in. Attendance registers are accurate and maintained in each room of the nursery, providing a clear record of when the children are present. However, no clear systems are in place to track the staff throughout the day, making it difficult to ascertain which members of staff are actually in the rooms at any given time.

Children are fully occupied and stimulated throughout their time in the nursery. Daily routines are organised effectively and the sessions and activities run extremely smoothly because all the staff plan ahead, ensuring the children are never left waiting around for the next activity. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The organisation employs a fully qualified and experienced manager to oversee the day to day running of the setting. Strong links and sound lines of communication are in place between the organisation and the nursery, ensuring the setting manager and her staff team are supported at all times. The Children's Work Director visits the setting regularly to ensure everything is going well and to monitor the effectiveness of the branch. The setting and staff are extremely proactive at assessing their own strengths and weaknesses. Staff appraisals take place throughout the year and performance

is monitored regularly, areas of strength are praised and training needs are identified, enabling the setting to continually improve their practice.

Daily activities and routines are thoroughly evaluated and the information gathered is used to improve the resources used or the delivery of the activity, to benefit the children. There are strong systems in place to ensure all stepping stones are covered throughout the year, providing a stimulating and well-balanced curriculum for all the children who attend. Time is allowed to revisit the less successful activities, ensuring all the planned aims and learning objectives are achieved. This in turn enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning. The organisation and management of the nursery are fully committed to continually reviewing and improving the quality of nursery education and care. Funding is made available for staff to complete extensive training to meet the needs of the nursery and to further improve their own personal development, raising the standards across the board for the children who attend the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure the complaints procedure and uncollected child procedures were put in place. They were asked to ensure a special needs statement was prepared and shared with parents and to ensure Ofsted were notified of significant events. All the issues have been addressed and information is shared with parents through notice boards, newsletters, the group prospectus and the copy of policies and procedures they receive, helping to keep them fully informed at all times.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to encourage children to be fully independent during snack time and increase the opportunities for children to develop their skills in climbing. Children are independent throughout the nursery day and are developing good self-care skills during at snack and lunch time. Children now have ample opportunities to develop their climbing skills as the nursery has a range of climbing frames to further develop their climbing skills.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action 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.

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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):

- implement systems to ensure records are kept to show when and how often sleeping children are monitored
- implement a system to track staff movements between the rooms throughout the day

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 children's spatial awareness in whole group situations

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