



Thornton Heath Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY292929
Inspection date	26 September 2005
Inspector	Sue Boylan
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Registered person	Croydon Council (Croydon School)
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Thornton Heath Early Years Centre opened in 1999. It is a maintained nursery school that offers extended day-care provision, run by the London Borough of Croydon. The Centre operates from a purpose built nursery in a residential area close to Thornton Heath High Street. Children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The centre serves the local area.

The centre offers a range of services for children and their families. Provision for children includes 16 day-care places for 2 to 3-year-olds, a nursery class for 52, 3 to 5-year-olds, crèche facilities for 12 children, 0 to 5-years-old and out of school care

for 52 children aged 3 to 5 years during term time and 52 children aged 3 to 8 years during the school holidays. There are currently 70 children aged from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 52 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of full and part-time sessions.

The centre is open each week day for 50 weeks of the year. The core day is from 09:25 until 15:30 with a breakfast club available from 08:00 and after school care available until 17:45. The centre supports children who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

A total of 26 staff are employed to work at the centre and 19 work with the children. More than half the staff who work directly with the children have recognised early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the importance of good hygiene practice through established everyday routines. They know, for example, they have to wash their hands before eating. Children are beginning to understand their own needs by asking for the toilet and wiping their own nose. Children are mostly protected from cross-contamination because staff have a good understanding of the centre's health and hygiene procedures and follow them effectively. However, children are not provided with individual bedding and have to sleep on the floor which does not enable them to rest comfortably.

Children benefit from a healthy and well balanced diet with varied meals and snacks. Children's individual dietary requirements are taken into account which ensures all children's nutritional needs are met. Staff take appropriate action to record and share information with parents about any accidents occurring at the centre and ensure children are well cared for if they become unwell during the day. This means children's welfare is fully supported. Children are protected from infectious illness because staff are familiar with the centre's policy for sickness.

All children have excellent opportunities to take part in daily outdoor play which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. They can play outside where activities and outdoor equipment is available at all times which develops large and fine motor skills, for example, cutting out, enclosed area for sand big enough to climb into, riding scooters and crawling through a tunnel.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where they grow in confidence and feel safe and secure. The centre is maintained to a high standard and children identify with their own room and staff who work with them. Equipment is safe, at child

height and in good condition which encourages independence skills and choice. Children's work is displayed and photographs of past activities and outings fosters a sense of belonging. There is an excellent variety of toys and resources which provide interest, stimulation and are suitable for the ages of children attending.

The security is very good ensuring children do not leave the premises without an appropriate adult. Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, not running inside, practising the green cross code when going to the shops and sitting down when they come down the slide. Children are supervised effectively as staff are deployed well throughout the centre, knowing in advance if they have to cover in another room. Regular risk assessments are carried out and staff report any hazards to senior management which are dealt with immediately. However children are at risk of injury from the fence in the outside play area as they can climb onto a wall and reach the top off the fence which has sharp wires protruding in some sections.

Children's welfare is safe guarded because most staff have completed training in child protection and first aid. They are aware what they should do if they had concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages are confident within the centre. They benefit from strong bonds with the consistent staff members who look after them, which fosters their emotional wellbeing and helps them achieve well. Staff working in the Rainbow Room with children aged two to three years make good use of the Birth to Three Framework taking into consideration individual needs when planning activities. Children receive lots of attention and comfort which helps them to settle quickly. Staff encourage communication skills by talking to the children about what they are doing and showing an interest in their response.

Children explore the environment around them and have regular opportunities to experiment with a range of creative materials, such as icing sugar painting, rice mixed with lentils, cornflour with glitter and bubble water with sea creatures to pretend with. Children enjoy initiating their own imaginary play and involve themselves in games of going shopping and cooking together in the wooden house. They have a love of books and will independently go to the book corner to choose a book to look at. Children have their favourite stories and participate enthusiastically when listening to a story, such as, "Where is the Monster". The sensory room provides good opportunities for children to relax in a calm atmosphere with their key worker.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into the centre and feel a sense of belonging as they

share their experiences about a trip to the bouncy castle and a forthcoming birthday. When children first come into the nursery they begin work with staff and their parents to complete an important "All about Me" book. This records achievements and displays paintings, drawings and photographs of the child and family members contributing to positive self-esteem. Some parents attend the drop-in with their children when they are under two years. This benefits children when they start attending the nursery because they are familiar with staff and the setting.

There are good opportunities for children to learn about the wider world with trips to the local shops, park and farm. Regular visitors such as the dentist, community police officer and fire service provide children with knowledge about who is there to help and support them. Activities and resources ensure children learn about different cultures and traditions. Children with special needs are supported well because staff work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Children behave very well and are beginning to understand taking turns and sharing, for example, waiting for the egg timer to finish before it is their turn to use the computer. They like to help staff and offer to tidy up, such as emptying the water trolley and putting away the beads. Staff use consistent boundaries, praise and appropriate strategies to manage behaviour.

Partnership with parents is very good. Children benefit from parent's involvement in the nursery, for example, a day organised for dad's to come in and participate with their children's play and activities. Staff keep parents informed about their child's day which contributes to children's wellbeing and initial home visits to discuss individual needs ensures consistent care is provided. Parents are provided with information about the centre which includes the relevant policies, however the complaints procedure does not make it clear who the regulator is.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by experienced, consistent staff and there are suitable contingency plans in place which ensures children always have appropriate supervision. Staff are aware of their roles and work well as a team. There is strong commitment to professional development of the staff who are valued for their contribution and effective systems ensure the service provided is monitored. Routines are well organised so children have opportunities to relax as well as be active. They are well supported within the structure of the centre. The adult/child ratio exceeds the number of staff required. All required policies and procedures are in place which contribute to children's health, safety and welfare. They work in practice because staff are kept fully up-to-date through meetings and appraisals. However the system to record children's hours of attendance is not effective and it is not clear from the registers what time the children arrive and depart. Overall the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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 children are not at risk from the wire fence in the outside play area
- make suitable provision available for children to rest comfortably and with use of individual bed linen
- ensure the complaints procedure includes details of the regulator
- devise an effective system to record the children's hours of attendance

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