



St Erth Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY334569
Inspection date	29 November 2006
Inspector	Linda Janet Chauveau
Setting Address	School Lane, St. Erth, Hayle, Cornwall, TR27 6HN
Telephone number	01736 755690
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Registered person	Pre-School Learning Alliance
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 Erth Children's Centre Nursery opened in 2006 to serve the local area of St Erth. It is linked to and works with two other children's centres at St Hilary and Marazion. The centre comprises a day nursery, which is currently open each weekday for 38 weeks of the year from 09:00 until 11:30. Additional services to support parents and carers attending the centre are sited at the Marazion centre; they include a day nursery and crèche, plus access to a variety of courses and drop-in support groups for parents, carers and their families who live in the community.

The provision is housed in purpose-built premises to the rear of St Erth Primary School. The school is situated in the rural village of St Erth, close to the town of Penzance, in Cornwall. All children share access to a secure enclosed play area. There are currently 13 children aged from two to under five years on roll in the nursery; of these nine receive free early education. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time.

The centre is one of more than thirty nurseries run by The Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) National Executive Committee. The PLA South West Regional Office oversees the operations of the centre, including the management of the budget and recruitment of staff. There is an overall children's centre lead practitioner. She is supported by a childcare and education manager, a part-time Sure Start qualified teacher affiliated to the centre, a Children Centre Development Manager from Sure Start in Hayle, an advisory teacher from the Local Authority Family Services and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA). The Children's Centre Nursery employs three staff. All staff have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 or 3. Two members of staff are currently attending additional training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for by staff that have a thorough understanding of the centre's comprehensive health and hygiene policies. They follow good practice when changing nappies and sensitively change soiled clothes after accidents. Children are kept safe from infection as staff clean the playroom and toilet areas regularly during the day. Children receive appropriate care if there is an emergency; staff hold paediatric first aid certificates, complete appropriate accident and medication records and take note of information about children's health and dietary needs.

Children are becoming independent in self-care skills, for example, when washing their hands after visiting the toilet and learning to put on their coats when playing outside and before going home. Children provide their own healthy snack at the centre and discuss the variety of nutritious fruits and vegetables available. Children can access regular drinks if they are thirsty.

Children have regular opportunities to learn about keeping healthy by enjoying exercise and time spent in the fresh air. They participate in daily outdoor play; however, there are limited opportunities to promote children's physical development through the use of challenging play equipment in the outdoor environment. Children have a good awareness of space, they move with confidence and control in a variety of ways as they use balance beams, ride bikes, throw balls and roll hoops. Indoors children are able to dance and exercise to music and movement tapes. Children competently use a variety of tools, for example, scissors, a computer mouse and construction sets to develop small muscle control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a purpose built centre. The premises are very clean, well-maintained and presented; the areas used by children are carefully organised to enable them to move around freely and safely. They have good space to take part in floor level and table top activities, using correctly sized equipment. Children access very good quality toys and resources from open plan storage units. The range of toys and equipment provided is regularly checked by staff and maintained in good condition.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures, for example, external doors are fully secured and all access to the premises is carefully monitored and vetted by the manager or lead practitioner. When playing outside staff use sensible levels of supervision to ensure children are kept safe. Children learn about fire safety by taking part in regular drills and planned topics have taught children about road safety awareness. All staff are vigilant in following the centre's safety procedures and the manager carries out regular risk assessments, as a result, risks to children are minimised.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. Management and senior staff co-ordinate child protection issues, they have a sound understanding of the procedures to follow should they wish to refer a concern. All staff are made aware of what to do if they have worries about a child as part of the centre's induction process and in house training is arranged to ensure all staff keep up to date with child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the centre. Children receiving free early education achieve well due to the staff's sound understanding and use of the early years guidance, the Foundation Stage curriculum, to plan an effective environment for care and learning. Children aged from under two to three years also attend the centre; they happily participate in planned activities available, which, although not currently linked to the guidance the Birth to three matters framework, support their development. The indoor space is organised effectively and resources are set out attractively to stimulate children's interest. The outdoor environment is less exciting and is mainly used for fresh air and exercise rather than as a learning environment.

All children arrive happy and eager to participate. They spend their time purposefully. They are learning to concentrate at their choice of activity and tidy away after themselves. They are developing independence as they choose between a variety of resources that are stimulating and developmentally appropriate. Children benefit from warm relationships with staff, who work with key groups. Staff are very interested in children, offering lots of praise and encouragement throughout the session. Staff show a good awareness of individual children's levels of progress.

Nursery Education.

The quality of children's teaching and learning is good. The centre manager and her lead practitioner have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and provide a wide range of activities and experiences to cover all areas of children's learning. Planning is clear and links to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals; however, plans do not indicate how activities could be extended to provide challenge for more able children. Key workers observe and assess children's progress. Developmental records are in place but are not yet being used effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning.

Children are well behaved; they follow simple instructions and know the centre's routines well. They participate with enthusiasm in independent play, for example, during role play and when using small world toys, such as the farm and train sets. They are developing concentration,

becoming engrossed when listening to stories and persevering when using scissors to cut paper for a collage activity. Children develop an awareness of their community and home life through individual contributions in group time when they discuss what they've done at home and through "Billy Bear" and his book which goes to a child's home each weekend. Staff support children in developing self-care skills, for example, when visiting the toilet or putting on coats before playing outside.

Most children can recognise their own name from cards used to self-register and find their place at snack time. An awareness of the initial sounds of letters is introduced in group activities. Children enjoy many opportunities to practise mark-making skills, for example, using a range of props in the role-play area. Attempts at emergent writing are praised but staff do not always provide sufficient challenge for more able children to develop their handwriting skills. Children enjoy listening to stories in small and large groups. Staff show that print carries meaning through activities to introduce labelling of items around the room. Children are introduced to the concept of number through group activities. All children enjoy counting up to 10 and enthusiastically count together the number of children at registration time. More able children recognise numerals with confidence. They learn about calculation in small group work, setting out and counting the number of cups and plates needed for snack time and by singing number rhymes. Staff use mathematical language well throughout the session to encourage children to compare shape and size.

Daily routines develop children's awareness of time and place as they discuss the days of the week and the weather. Children develop an interest in technology using props in the role-play area, such as tills and calculators and are able to complete simple computer programs. They begin to appreciate their own culture and the cultural traditions of others through planned activities. The well-resourced and presented role-play area, set out as a hairdressing salon, provides a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their language, imagination, creative and mathematical skills. Children discuss hairstyles, make appointment bookings, and use the till to take payments; they act out washing and styling each others' hair using a range of relevant props.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have formed trusting relationships with staff and each other. Staff have sound knowledge of children's individual needs. All children are warmly welcomed and fully included. Staff take time to ensure that children new to the centre are fully settled in. Children have access to an adequate range of resources and planned activities to learn about their local community and the wider world. There are appropriate systems in place to support children with additional needs. The manager is able to access support from outside agencies should this be required. The centre fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children's behaviour is good; they participate harmoniously in independent play with little adult support. They are considerate of each other, for example, immediately apologising and checking a friend is unharmed after a minor mishap during role play. Children respond well to staff and happily follow simple instructions, tidying up mid session and setting out cups and plates at snack time. All staff act as calm role models and lead by setting good examples. Good behaviour

and manners are praised and rewarded. As a result, children develop self-esteem and are confident to express their thoughts and feelings.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff have developed sound relationships with parents and carers of children currently attending the centre. The manager and lead practitioner provide daily verbal feedback on children's activities and progress at the centre. Regular newsletters provide information about the planned education curriculum. Information about the centre is also available in the reception area. Staff obtain good information from parents on their child's capabilities and preferences when they join the centre by completion of an entry questionnaire and comprehensive registration forms. The centre is developing systems to review children's progress each term with parents in order that they can become fully involved in their children's learning. At present, there is no information available to tell prospective parents about the operation of the centre or about nursery education. A prospectus has been produced by the manager, which will be made available to all parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff are employed by The Pre-school Learning Alliance and are able to work across all the care provisions provided by this Children's Centre. Comprehensive employment, induction and appraisal systems for all staff ensure their on-going suitability and professional development. Staff's understanding and implementation of policies and procedures means that children are well cared for and the centre operates successfully. All required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and regularly reviewed.

Staff clearly know their roles and responsibilities. They effectively implement routines to enable children to access a balanced range of planned and free choice activities throughout the session. The manager, lead practitioner and her staff use time and resources effectively to provide well-organised care and learning, however, the outdoor areas have not yet been developed into a stimulating environment.

The centre is currently focussing on establishing childcare provision in a village where previously none existed. Plans to offer a breakfast and lunch club are being developed with the long term aim to offer full day care when financially viable. The centre is also used by Sure Start to offer "stay and play" and "crafty caterpillar" sessions to enable parents and carers living in the community to participate in play sessions with their children.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from being cared for by a committed and qualified staff team. The centre manager has a clear vision for education within the centre. She provides effective support for the lead practitioner and her staff team. The manager motivates and supports staff and children, she is building and supporting a committed staff team and is a good role model, actively participating when working at the setting. She monitors the provision effectively and has evaluated the quality of the provision against outcomes for children; identifying areas for improvement both in staff development and in provision of resources and the development of the environment. Guidance and support is also provided by local and regional staff from the Pre-school Learning Alliance and qualified teachers employed

by Sure Start and the local authority. 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

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.

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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):

- develop the use of the outside play areas to create an outdoor learning environment and to provide children with a wider range of activities to offer challenge and develop their physical strength
- develop planning to show how the Birth to three matters framework links to the planned education curriculum

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):

- continue to develop: the curriculum planning to show how activities can be extended to provide challenge for more able children and the systems used to assess progress to plan children's individual development targets.

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