

Charnwood Nursery and Family Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	501447
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspector	Barbara Christine Wearing
Setting Address	Charnwood Nursery and Family Centre, St Pauls Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 4RY
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Registered person	Charnwood Trust
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 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?

Charnwood Nursery School and Family Centre is run by the Charnwood Trust and opened in 1978. The nursery operates from a purpose-built, two storey building in the Heaton Moor area of Stockport, which is close to parks, shops and the library.

The nursery provides care from 09.00 to 15.30 Monday to Friday, term time only. Wrap-around care is provided from 08.00 to 09.00 and from 15.30 to 16.30 Monday to Friday, term time only. The setting also provides an opportunity group which runs every afternoon, a play scheme that runs for a week each summer for children who have with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their siblings, and a support group and drop in sessions for parents. A toy library is accessible to all families.

There are currently 74 children on roll, this includes 52 children in receipt of funding for early education. The nursery supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The local education authority currently funds 22 children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities.

The children have access to two open plan play areas, one on each floor; two soft play rooms; a light room; and several therapy rooms. Bathroom facilities are available on both floors. A garden and playground are provided for outdoor play.

The nursery is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of 30, which includes teachers, a nurse, nursery nurses, special needs coordinators, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, family and support workers, administrative staff, a cook/housekeeper, volunteers and domestic workers.

The facility is a member of the British Association of Early Childhood Education, the National Day Nurseries Association and the Toy Library Association, and gains support from the Sure Start Development Officer, the Sensory Impaired Services, the local health authority and speech, language and occupational therapists.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The setting maintains excellent standards of hygiene. Staff follow the clear health and safety and hygiene procedures meticulously, thereby protecting children from the spread of infection and cross-contamination. Children develop independence in their personal hygiene skills as they are given varying and appropriate levels of support as they go to the toilet and wash their hands using accessible, low-level sinks, soap and paper hand towels. A number of children have complex health needs and staff work extremely closely with all parents and other professionals to ensure that children's individual health and dietary needs are catered for. Staff follow the detailed sick child policy and administration of medication procedures, and children's individual action plans are readily accessible should they require emergency medical attention. There are always staff on duty with a current first aid certificate and a number of staff have training in paediatric resuscitation. Therefore, children are well taken care in the case of illness.

Children socialise freely during snack and mealtimes and benefit from a wide range of healthy snacks and freshly prepared meals. They enjoy independent snack times during the play sessions. Children help each other to pour their drinks, learn signs for fruit, drinks and biscuits then finish and choose a friend to help wash up the cups when everyone has had their snack. Staff have worked closely with parents to develop their healthy eating policy and have implemented thoughtful and innovative ways to encourage children to develop healthy eating habits. Children are rewarded for trying new tastes, parents are encouraged to bring in a book or other alternative to sweets to celebrate children's birthdays and staff take many opportunities to chat to children about food values and eating a balanced diet.

Staff provide superb opportunities to develop all children's individual physical skills throughout the day, using well thought-out and resourced indoor and outdoor areas. Staff have appropriately high expectations of all children. Children with limited mobility are gently and sensitively reminded to use their bodies to develop their muscle control, for example, as they are supported in walking down the steps outside and reminded to use both hands when rolling and squeezing play dough. Children respond positively, make excellent progress and take delight in the high levels of praise they receive from staff. Children have regular access to soft play areas indoors where they jump, push with their legs, roll and climb in, on, over and under. They have great fun as they engage in well organised music and movement sessions. Children with multiple and profound learning and physical disabilities are supported and enthusiastically move in response

to instructions from staff and music and as they watch their peers. The setting employs physiotherapists who work closely with children, parents and other staff to offer support and training. Some children attend hydrotherapy sessions as part of their nursery sessions and the setting facilitates sessions for parents and their children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The nursery provides children with a wonderful, bright, stimulating, safe, secure and caring environment. Great consideration is given to the play areas both indoors and out, ensuring that children of all abilities and ages are highly involved and stimulated in their freely chosen activities. The outside area provides a wide choice of activities and experiences in all the learning areas and is a true extension of the indoor play. Staff are experts in observing possible barriers to children accessing or fully exploring activities. They organise themselves, the room areas and the thoughtfully purchased, specialised equipment extremely effectively. The extensive range of sensory and natural materials is beautifully presented. Therefore, all children are enabled to thoroughly explore their environment and take full advantage of the superb range of facilities, activities and experiences on offer throughout the day. Staff continually build upon and adapt the extensive range of toys and resources in response to children's interests and development, therefore, children practise and consolidate their learning and set themselves further challenges. Equipment and play resources are of high quality and are well maintained.

Staff have a high regard for children's safety at all times and are particularly aware of the importance of supporting children in developing skills to keep themselves safe and allowing children to explore and take risks within a safe environment. Children learn how to climb up and down steps and explore between hedges in the garden area. They are shown how to use equipment, such as scissors, safely and learn about fire safety and road safety through visits from local fire and road safety officers. Children confidently remind adults of rules to keep safe as they state 'you shouldn't really rock on chairs', and explain, 'you might fall off'. Staff work with high regard for the comprehensive health and safety measures and procedures in place, and robust and detailed risk assessments are carried out regularly.

Children's welfare is given a high priority and they are protected from harm as they are cared for by adults who have undergone a rigorous vetting procedure and who have a wide variety of experience and expertise. They have a clear understanding of the up-to-date procedures in place for safeguarding children and of their roles within them. Staff attend regular training and the nursery has a digital video disc (DVD) that gives current information regarding this area of work. The setting's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children are actively shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit hugely from the superb interaction with highly skilled staff and volunteers. The enthusiasm in which adults and children engage with each other and in activities is infectious. Staff demonstrate an in-depth understanding of all the children's needs and stages of development. They are very observant and take genuine delight in children's individual achievements. This information is shared with each other, parents and other children, and is used to adapt and plan future stimulating, varied and imaginative activities that promote children's development further and enable them to make excellent progress in all areas. Children

engage in an extensive range of exciting activities throughout the day. They have time to play on their own, with peers and staff and in large and small groups, both indoors and out. Staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and link this skilfully with their play levels that recognise further steps that children are making. They use many innovative ways to encourage language development for all children. Children with English as an additional language make exceedingly good progress as staff work closely with parents and speech and language specialists in order to develop the most effective means to encourage their confidence, self-esteem and development of English language. Staff listen closely to children. Sign language is used throughout the day, during planned and spontaneous activities, and staff are sensitive and responsive to children's non-verbal communications and body language. They consistently take opportunities to ask children questions to extend their language and thinking. When unwrapping a present a member of staff asks children what they think it might be; when children respond that they think it is a ball. she questions whether or not it is the shape of a ball.

Children access a wealth of different natural materials throughout the day. They play in water, in a sunken indoor sandpit where they take off their shoes and socks, with paint, play dough, shaving foam, a variety of wooden and metal objects and different fabrics. Children are given outstanding levels of support to enable them to optimise these materials. Staff lie on the floor with children who cannot sit up unaided and paint pictures with them using various painting and drawing materials. Children have great fun as they make play dough and use it to make chickens. In response to children's use of the play dough, staff introduce further materials and the activity extends to putting on feathers and building intricate nests. Staff and children giggle as they recall that one child thought that the staff's chicken was a snowman.

There are many activities during which children develop their imaginative skills. They particularly enjoy role play in the doctors surgery and this is made more magical as staff become patients, surrounded by children taking their blood pressure, administering medication and making future appointments using the pen and paper and toy laptop provided.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are highly stimulated and quickly become engrossed in the activities they choose from the exciting and varied range on offer. Staff are skilled in observing children. They have a thorough knowledge of each child's interests and stages of development and clear aims for future progress. These are discussed regularly as a team and are used to inform the effective short term planning and enable staff to challenge children spontaneously at an appropriate level. The staff team are continuing to develop their procedures for recording these observations and assessments. Long, medium and short term planning and the skilled way in which staff interact with children demonstrate their excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Pre-school children greatly enjoy an adult-led session during each day. These are very well planned and expertly led by the talented staff. Children are highly motivated and actively contribute. Staff are skilled in being flexible, following children's interests and extending their learning. A group of children learning about the letter 'd' bring in objects from home beginning with 'd'. They discuss these items and count them. One child states that the dragon is green because it is a vegetarian. They are asked to listen to the sound of sweets that begin with 'd' as they drop into the box. They then calculate whether or not they have enough for all the children, and talk about healthy eating and different choices. During child-led activities, staff are skilled in allowing children to explore on their own and interact with them in a way that encourages children to explore more thoroughly and optimise their challenges.

Children develop friendships and seek each other out to share play activities. They are highly sensitive to the needs of others and naturally adapt how they communicate to ensure that they are understood. For example, at tidy-up time, when a child with special needs continues to play, another child tells her that it is tidy-up time and not play time. The child continues to play and the other child stands in front of her, gains eye contact and explains slowly that it is tidy-up time. Children's behaviour is exemplary. They have a clear understanding of the boundaries and are polite and considerate. They sign and say 'please' and 'thank you', and state that they are waiting patiently for their dinner. Staff use many positive behaviour management strategies, such as encouraging children to listen and take turns during group times by thanking the children who are not shouting out. Children benefit from a variety of trips within the local community, such as to the local nursing home to sing Christmas songs, and from visitors to the nursery, such as the fire service and a local band.

Children chat to each other and adults throughout the day. They develop an extensive vocabulary as adults show an interest in what they have to say and ask questions to extend them further. A child states that the chicken that she has made from play dough has a broken wing, a member of staff asks her why and she replies that it flew too much. Another group of children in the home area talk about going on holiday. This extends, through enthusiastic questioning from staff, to going to the moon, finding aliens, going by aeroplane or rocket, deciding that the rocket would get there first as it is faster, going to heaven, discussing what heaven might be like, and deciding how many people would fit in the rocket. They then identify that 20 is the total of one child's and one member of staff's fingers, thereby demonstrating how staff develop spontaneous child-led activities to challenge them at various stages in their development, in many areas of learning. Children link sounds and letters, are developing good mark making and writing skills and many can recognise their own name. They practise these throughout the session as they make marks with their fingers in trays of shaving foam and paint, as they write their names independently or with support on their art work, as they write shopping lists in the home area, fill out paperwork at the garage in the outdoor area and as they make birthday cards in the well resourced writing area. Some children are beginning to recognise and form letters while others are able to write familiar words such as 'mummy'. Staff are skilled at supporting, praising, challenging and enabling all children. Children develop a love of books. They look at books independently, with friends and with adults during the play sessions. They are absorbed during story times as they become involved in telling the story when they call out repeated phrases and use visual props.

Children count, use mathematical language and develop mathematical concepts throughout the day. Learning that takes place during adult-led activities is practised and consolidated through their spontaneous play, and displays around the nursery reinforce this learning. Staff use a variety of innovative ways to develop children's mathematical skills. Children jump or hop to a specific number, use a number line to calculate that $1+9=10$ and another $2=12$, learn to recognise numerals as staff use a 'tricking finger' to point out numbers on a number line and talk about high and low numbers. They make graphs to show the numbers of children who come to nursery in various ways and name shapes as they use shape sorters and puzzles.

Children benefit from extensive opportunities to explore and investigate a wide range of materials indoors and out. They observe changes, similarities and differences as they study life-cycles, floating and sinking, baking, and growing seeds and plants. Children design and make as they use conventional construction toys to build, use glue, scissors, card and paper to design their own cards, and as they use recycled materials to build models. They develop excellent skills in using information, communication and technology equipment as they freely access the computer, using simple programs, and skilfully use the mouse or keyboard. Children

develop a sense of time as they change the calendar and weather chart on a daily basis. They spontaneously chat about past events and holidays and correctly order days of the week, discussing which days they come to nursery and which days they stay at home. They explore the environment surrounding the nursery as they go on a local walk and take turns to take photographs using a digital camera. They learn about the wider world through various activities, displays, posters and stories. Parents spend time in the nursery talking to children and doing activities with them relating to their own customs and festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Iranian New Year.

Children have a wealth of opportunities to develop their large muscle skills and coordination as they access a wide range of equipment and activities indoors and out, and take part in regular music and movement sessions. They competently climb, slide, jump, hop, pedal bikes, balance and run and change direction at speed. Different games, such as hopscotch, are introduced as planned, adult-led activities and equipment is then made available for children to use freely during future outside play sessions. Children develop very good fine motor skills as they access resources such as scissors, pens, pencils, dressing up clothes and threading materials.

Children develop their excellent imagination skills through various areas of play, such as when playing with play dough, with small world resources and in the sand and water. They take on different roles as areas in the nursery are made into doctors surgeries, hospitals with incubators and lunar landscapes. Children's creativity is encouraged and valued. They have many opportunities to freely explore a wide range of art materials and produce individual pieces of art and craft that are attractively displayed around the nursery. A wide range of good quality musical instruments is accessed by children on a regular basis. They study the instruments and are aware of the sounds that they make. Children listen to pieces of traditional music from various countries each week and benefit from regular music sessions and singing sessions, during which they have a piano accompaniment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There is a remarkable feeling of respect and valuing within the nursery that extends between children, parents and families, volunteers, staff and students. Staff show a genuine interest in children as individuals and as members of their family unit. Staff are acutely aware of and sensitive to the needs of families. They have superb relationships with parents, offering support, advice and care in a wide variety of innovative ways, whilst remaining aware of the limitations of their role. They build up trusting partnerships, enabling parents to build on their relationships with their children and share the excellent practice between nursery and home. Parents and carers complete a child profile before their child settles in to nursery. This gives details such as children's health and dietary needs, stages of development, likes and dislikes, names of friends and families, language spoken at home and toileting needs. This helps children to settle happily within the nursery, gives staff a starting point, fosters a relationship that values parents and families and effectively enables consistency of care. Children are cared for, truly valued and nurtured. They thrive within this superb environment. They develop a high self-esteem, confidence in themselves and others and a desire to meet the high, yet appropriate, expectations of the staff. Staff are calm, consistent and positive in their behaviour management strategies. In turn, children care for each other, are busy, motivated and play happily within the appropriate boundaries. Staff are particularly highly skilled in ensuring that all children are included in activities and that there are suitable challenges for all children. The inclusion policy of the nursery is superbly effective and of great benefit to all the children. There are many exceptional examples of how children learn about diversity. They learn sign language, greet each other in

various languages at circle time and adults working with children are positive role models. There are posters, toys and resources that reflect positive, non-stereotypical images of gender, race, culture, disability and religion, and children take part in various activities that encourage them to learn about differences and similarities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. They are actively involved in their children's learning in various ways. Children bring in topic-related items from home and parents are invited in on special occasions such as Christmas and to share in their traditional celebrations. At the opportunity group that parents often attend with their children before starting nursery, staff and parents work and play with the children alongside each other. Information regarding the curriculum and the policies, procedures and routines within the setting are effectively shared with parents verbally, via informative notice boards, a regular newsletter and a parents' information booklet. Training DVDs on child-related issues are available from the setting's toy library. Information regarding children is shared openly. This is often by means of verbal communication as children and parents are greeted in the morning or at the end of the session. Children who are transported to the nursery have diaries that effectively pass information between home and nursery regarding the child's day, activities, accidents, medication, feeding and toileting. Regular meetings and parents' evenings are held during which staff share children's assessment records and show photographs and DVDs of children at play within the nursery. Parents' views are actively sought, for example, when reviewing the setting's healthy eating policy. Feedback from parents and carers is highly complimentary and demonstrates the considerable appreciation that they have for the staff, whom they describe as exceptional, fun, caring, supportive and dedicated. Parents describe the setting as fantastic and unique.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit enormously from the high staff-child ratio and the multi-disciplinary, highly skilled staff team who work closely together towards a shared goal. The management team value and respect the staff, volunteers and students. Various efficient methods of communication are in place, ensuring that staff are aware of daily events, changes in circumstances and are able to share their views, opinions and ideas. Staff undergo a thorough recruitment and vetting procedure, induction, probationary period and regular appraisals. They demonstrate a clear understanding of, and work in line with, the comprehensive policies and procedures that are personal to the setting. Staff have many opportunities to develop their individual skills through training and mentoring. They are passionate about their work and show a genuine commitment to provide the best for all the children. They organise their time and play areas effectively to enhance all aspects of play and provide a rich, varied and imaginative environment. Therefore, children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution are promoted. The leadership and management of nursery education are outstanding. The management team continually reflects upon the practice within the nursery. They observe, talk to parents and staff, review records and evaluate how effectively they meet the care and educational needs of the children. They establish very clear and detailed development plans and staff share in the enthusiasm as they work towards these goals, in order to ensure continuing improvement and to maintain the consistently high standards of care and education within the provision. The setting receives support from the Sure Start Improvement Officers and early years advisory teacher and disseminates their good practice as they deliver training to other professionals. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous nursery education inspection gave a point for consideration to improve resources in the home area. In response to this the provision has purchased new home area furniture and equipment. It is of high quality and enables children to extend their imaginary play and provides opportunities to 'act out' in a familiar setting.

The setting has improved their methods for recording the times of arrival and departure of staff and children and there is now a clear and easily accessible record of this information.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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

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 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