



St Martins Garden Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY339058
Inspection date	31 January 2007
Inspector	Sue Vernon
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Registered person	Bath and North East Somerset Council
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 Martin's Garden Children's Centre was registered in 2006 and operates from St Martin's Garden Primary School, in Bath. It is run by Bath and North East Somerset Council. The Children's Centre is registered for full day care for children up to the age of eight, and also offers a breakfast and after-school club. The centre has sole use of a purpose built building with an enclosed outdoor play area for each age group. A maximum of 57 children may attend the centre at any one time. The centre is open each weekday from 8.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year.

There are currently 55 children on roll. Of these, 41 receive funding for early education. The centre supports 19 children with learning difficulties/disabilities and five children with English as an additional language. The centre employs 13 members of staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

The Children's Centre also offers a wide range of weekly groups and activities for both children and parents/carers from the local area.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a variety of fresh fruit daily at snack time which promotes their wellbeing. They learn about healthy eating through topic work and try different foods such as carrot and cucumber sticks. Information on any special dietary requirements is gathered from parents in order that staff can support them. This helps children and parents feel secure.

Staff use effective procedures for promoting an hygienic environment. For example, staff wear plastic gloves and aprons when changing nappies and all staff clean tables regularly with anti-bacterial spray. Routines are in place for regularly cleaning toys and equipment. Babies have their own flannels for hand wiping and older children are encouraged to learn about regular hand washing. The written sickness policy explains why children who are infectious are not allowed to attend. This protects children from the possibility of cross-infections, however temperatures in the rooms are not consistently kept at a level that would support both comfort and the prevention of infections. Appropriate records of children's medical requirements are kept which ensures their medical needs are met.

Opportunities for regular outdoor play are offered using an outdoor area with tables and play equipment, although not all funded children access these consistently so are not challenged effectively. Balancing and climbing skills develop as children use climbing frames in the wider school playing area. They make their own obstacle course using wooden blocks and other equipment both indoor and outdoors. Children confidently manoeuvre on wheeled toys and negotiate around each other well. They exercise indoors to activity tapes or music. Children develop skills for using tools such as paint brushes or cutters with dough and effectively join together train track or construction kit pieces.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where risks have been assessed and minimised effectively. Staff perform a daily check of all rooms and the outdoor play area before use. This ensures that children can move around safely during play activities and within the routine of the day. Building security is monitored effectively with a record kept of all visitors who attend different areas of the centre. This promotes children's safety. Fire safety issues have been addressed effectively and suitable evacuation procedures are known and practised. Children develop awareness of how to monitor their own safety when staff remind them why they need to sit properly or what they have to remember as they use the climbing frame.

All rooms are attractive and welcoming to parents and children alike with posters and displays of children's work shown. Toys and play resources are set out ready before sessions which enable children to separately smoothly from their carers. Appropriate equipment such as suitable

height tables and chairs is used in all play rooms which enables children to access the play opportunities well. Good storage units display resources accessibly which helps children make independent choices in their play. Babies enjoy low-level sensory resources such as musical toys and safety mirrors. Good quality play resources are used for all ages and include wooden small world sets, construction kits, puzzles, dressing-up selections and books. The after-school children have a satisfactory range of play resources including puzzles and games.

Children's welfare is supported by the staff's good understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to be followed if any concerns arise. A clear policy is in place which is made available to parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and interested by the interesting range of activities provided. They move smoothly into play because staff plan well in advance and prepare a good selection of resources to hand. Age-appropriate activities are planned and offered which ensure children are challenged effectively. For example, babies enjoy sand play on their high chair trays whilst older children enjoy scooping and creating environments for play-people in sand trays. Staff are sensitive to children's routines and know them well which makes them feel secure. For example, staff know when babies are tired so in need of quiet play, having a cuddle and looking at sensory books. Children's work is praised and displayed which builds their self-esteem. Staff make good relationships with children, giving consistent praise and encouragement which helps children persist at their play, such as when children work together to finish a difficult puzzle. Children happily look to the staff to share their fun such as when pretending to be Goldilocks or the three bears in the home corner or to seek support such as with resolving problems with fitting train track together.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The staff team have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and the areas of learning. They use this to plan an interesting range of learning opportunities for funded children. The staff understand how children learn and are skilful in prompting children's thinking with open questions. This ensures children are engaged in their play and are motivated to learn, for example when talking about Goldilocks and the three bears, staff ask 'how many bears are sleeping here, what might happen next?'. Observations of children's responses are made and linked into records of children's learning progress. This helps staff identify each child's next stage of learning and link into future activity planning.

Children are confident and enjoy learning through play. They develop independence as they fetch or put away painting aprons or take themselves to the toilet. Children learn to have good relationships with each other. They enjoy putting things away together or taking turns with the computer. They are able to work in small groups such as when threading cards as well as sitting and listening to each other at circle time.

Children enjoy a print rich environment and value books, particularly enjoying taking books home to share with parents/carers. They recognise their name cards and are able to link phonic sounds with some letters. Good opportunities are offered for mark-making with pens and paper being offered in several areas of the play environment. Children happily create letters, menus and cards and write recognisable letters from their names.

Children count within activities such as circle time or snack time when they take three pieces of fruit at a time. They know some shapes by name and understand simple addition and subtraction, using fingers to show quantity or how many if one more is added. Simple mathematical language such as bigger, smaller is used when comparing the size of the three bears and their beds and bowls. Children add more sand to make taller piles when scooping sand or know when cups are empty during snack time.

Some planned opportunities to learn about the natural world around them are offered, such as when children enjoy a winter walk around the school grounds or learn about birds in winter and make food to hang on trees outside. They learn about the value of technology as they use the computer and gain confidence with the mouse. Children reflect on time as staff ask them if they remember what they made or did before. Children learn about changes as they mix ingredients for cooking, for example mixing oats into porridge or see paint ice-cubes melt as they are used.

Children confidently select a variety of art and craft resources with which to express themselves. They dip their hands in paint pots and enjoy using hands as well as brushes to create pictures. Different textures help them explore media in different ways such as wet and dry sand, water play with ice cubes, play dough and corn flour mixture. Children enjoy expressing themselves to music, joining in familiar rhymes and actions and using musical instruments to try rhythm changes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by staff who work closely with parents or carers in order to meet the individual needs of each child and ensure they are fully included in the provision. This is done through established settling-in procedures and regular meetings with parents or carers. Good feedback is given through daily discussions, display boards, newsletters and written records. For example, parents of babies receive details of their eating and sleeping routines. This supports consistency of care for the children. Policies and procedures are made available to parents, though some small detail around the complaints procedure is not in place. Any individual needs such as support for language development are planned for carefully, involving both parents and professional support. Key workers review and monitor progress carefully and plan to ensure all children benefit from the play and learning opportunities offered.

Staff use appropriate methods effectively to manage behaviour. For example, distraction and quiet discussion help children learn to share and take turns with garden wheeled toys. Children develop awareness of the behaviour expectations as staff consistently encourage and praise them. Children are rewarded with enthusiastic praise when they help and work well together, for example putting things away or taking turns to make a large puzzle. Stickers for trying to

do well, for example when helping put things away, build children's self-esteem. Staff re-enforce children's achievements by explaining why stickers were given or showing a piece of work which builds children's sense of self-worth. Staff are excellent role models. They are consistently polite, friendly, calm and helpful which helps children learn the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

The partnership with parents of funded children is good. Parents receive information about the curriculum and the areas of learning in leaflets and discussions. Topic webs are displayed within easy sight and detail how activities link to the learning areas. Participation and comments are encouraged and ideas for how parents can share in topic learning activities are detailed in each child's record book. Parents learn about their child's progress through regular discussions and meetings as well freely available photographic record books.

The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are respected and their individual needs are known. For example, children with English as an additional language learn the routines of the nursery through visual time lines using photographs. Children's comments about their experiences at home are encouraged and valued at circle time or when staff sit with the children at snack time. Children learn about their own and other cultures through topic work such as stories and craft activities around Divali and Bonfire night.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective recruitment and appointment procedures are used to ensure staff working with children are appropriately cleared and have suitable qualifications. Staff hold early years qualifications and the management's support for on-going training ensures that all children benefit from good quality care and interesting play experiences. Staff ratios are met and often exceeded which ensures good support for all children attending. Use of the different age-rooms is well planned in order to meet the care and play needs of both babies and older children, for example cots are ready for sleep and toys ready on suitable height tables. All rooms have areas for soft seating or floor play and areas for art work and other messy play opportunities. Appropriate records, policies and procedures are in place and used effectively to support consistency of care for the children.

The quality of leadership and management for nursery education is good.

Children and their families benefit from the commitment of the management and centre's team to provide good quality education. The staff team work closely together and share responsibility for the delivery of the curriculum. All work together to plan activities and assess children's learning. Daily discussions and regular reviews ensure that children's progress is monitored and the quality of teaching is evaluated. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

not applicable

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.

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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):

- maintain an ambient temperature in all rooms, particularly in the baby room
- ensure all details of the complaints procedure are available to parents.

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):

- further develop learning opportunities for all children in the outdoor environment.

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