



The Family Playcentre Barton Hill Settlement

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106906
Inspection date	24 November 2006
Inspector	Yvonne Campbell
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Registered person	Family Placement Settlement
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional 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 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?

The Family Playcentre is managed by a parent led management committee and operates from the Barton Hill Settlement site which is a long established training and resource facility in the heart of the community. It first registered to provide day care in 1997 and since then has extended the building and the type of care it provides. This now includes: the Crèche, the Twos Group, The Pre-School group and a Neighbourhood Nursery. Staff also operate other services for children and their parents including: the One World Group, Young Mums and Playing Together.

The Playcentre is opened for five days a week all year round. A maximum of 70 children from the age of birth to five years may attend the Playcentre at any one time. They attend at various times and sessions. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 202 children on roll. The setting currently supports children with additional needs and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. 22 children receive the nursery education grant.

The setting employs 15 staff who have direct contact with children. Of these, 12 hold level three qualification including the Development Manager who also has a masters degree in Early Education and Care. One member of staff is working towards a level 3 qualification and a further two have qualifications in community development and counselling.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted through effective practice and well established daily hygienic routines which are known to all staff. Tables are clean with an antibacterial solution before and after meals to remove any germs and the remnants of play material such as paint and glue. Children know that they wash their hand before meals and snacks as they do this as a part of the general routine. Staff remind children to wash their hands after using the toilet they make sure that soap and clean paper towels are available for wiping their hands. The toilets and nappy changing areas are very child friendly as they are clean and colourfully decorated making them very pleasant areas for children to use. Children who are sick are excluded from care in order to prevent the spread of infectious illnesses to others. Parents have access to the sickness policy which is included in the settings operational plan. All staff have current first aid certificates and competently deal with any minor injuries which occur during play. The first aid box in the Butterfly room is well stocked, accessible for use. Contents checked regularly and replaced when necessary. However, the first aid box in the Caterpillar room is not kept in the designated place and there maybe a delay in accessing the contents in an emergency.

Children have nutritious meals and snacks which meet their dietary needs and comply with their parents instructions. Staff have written information about food allergies and expressed preferences. Children have fresh fruit at snack time. Staff cut them into small manageable pieces so that children can explore a variety of different taste. Drinks of water, milk and juice are freely available and staff encourage children to drink and refill their cups as requested. However, some temporary staff are not sufficiently aware of the dietary needs of all the children and there is a small risk of children ingesting food they should not have. Freshly cooked meals are served in the Caterpillar room. Lunch is prepared at a nearby local authority nursery and the standard of nutrition is in keeping with government food standards for schools. Staff sit with the children who talk about what they like to eat. They have excellent table manners and know how to use knives and forks correctly.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities to encourage their healthy physical development. They have outside play in the well equipped and stimulating outdoor area which has large fixed play equipment and some enclosed areas for sitting and for developing imaginary play. Mobile toys such as bikes and tricycles are available to help children develop large muscle strength. Staff encourage children to spent time outdoors in the fresh air each day and many activities take

place outdoors whenever the weather permits. Children have Wellington boots and coats to keep them warm and dry if the ground is damp.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are relaxed and at ease in the warm and welcoming environment created by staff. The Playcentre has a large and spacious entrance foyer with various displays, notices and childcare information. Staff photos are also displayed. Space is provided outdoors for the secure storage of buggies used to transport younger children to the centre. Children have a sense of belonging as they have their own coat pegs with their photographs.

Care takes place in two large base rooms. The Caterpillar and the Butterfly room are creatively decorated and are organised into different play areas to provide children with a variety of rich learning opportunities and to foster curiosity and choices. For example, children choose if they want to play in the book corner, the social corner the computer or with materials such as sand and water. Children enjoy playing in safe enclosed indoor spaces. Staff use large pieces of semi transparent material to cover the social play corner in the Caterpillar room. Children show a sense of excitement and adventure as they have imaginative play in the area. A wide range of good quality toys and equipment is available to support play and learning. Toys are safe as they are purchased from educational suppliers. Staff check toys each day before and after use and broken items are discarded.

Staff are vigilant about safety issues and they ensure that the Playcentre is a safe and secure environment for children. The front door is secured and parents ring to be allowed into the base rooms. Children remain safe at dropping off and collection times as staff monitor the entrance and ensure that there are no unauthorised visitors. Staff and children are familiar with the procedure for evacuating the building in an emergency as regular fire drills are carried out on the premises and records are maintained in the main administrative office of the Settlement. A comprehensive risk assessment is also carried out by the organisation and staff have ongoing awareness of hazards. For example, children do not play in the grass area of the garden after heavy rain as the area becomes slippery.

Children's wellbeing is safeguarded and promoted as staff have through understanding of child protection issues. They know the signs and symptoms of abuse and are clear about the action to take if abuse is suspected. A clearly written policy is shared with parents. A more detailed policy is provided for the staff. The Development Manager is the designated person for liaising with outside agencies. She has recently attended an intensive multi disciplinary child protection training course.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Younger children in the Crèche have very good care and close contact with the adults who look after them. The crèche is held in a section of the Caterpillar room for children whose parents are on courses in the Settlement. Children are held and comforted if they become fretful. They

have sufficient toys and many activities are in line with the components of the Birth to three Matters framework. For example, staff have made excellent "treasure baskets" to promote sensory awareness. They contain items such as: cones, shells and objects of different colours and textures which stimulate children's sight, hearing and sense of touch. Children show a strong interest in books and enjoy listening to stories with staff in the comfortable book corner.

Children in the Two's group are very active and involved in their play. They concentrate on their selected tasks for reasonable periods of time before moving on and selecting another. Staff provide a range of activities for explorative free play. These include sand with equipment for scooping and filling. Children show good hand to eye coordination and are developing an awareness of capacity as they fill and empty the containers.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children who have nursery education in the nursery and pre-school group are making very good progress. They are confident and outgoing when relating to their peers and to adults. Staff provide opportunities for children to talk and to be acknowledged by others in several ways. For example, at the beginning of each session, children in the Butterfly room have a time of sharing personal news such as birthdays or other significant family events. They answer to their names and sing a hello song which mentions each child present.

Children enjoy a range of good quality story and factual books in the very homely and comfortable book corner. Books are well illustrated so children can look and tell the story. Some book are bilingual to help children recognise that that there are different ways of writing words. They express themselves clearly during conversation and staff encourage them to talk about what they are doing during the activities. Staff extend children's vocabulary with the use of descriptive words such as clingy and sticky during creative craft activities. They are developing the understanding of other forms of communication such as signing. This is used during sing and sign in the Caterpillar room. Children enjoy the rhyming songs and coordinate the movements of their hands and fingers well to keep in time with the adults leading the singing. Two member of staff have introductory British Sign Language courses. Signing also used effectively to communicate stories to children who are learning English as an additional language and they show signs of understanding and enjoyment when sharing books with staff.

Children are making good progress in mathematical development. Staff provide opportunities for children to start developing mathematical concepts. They sort by colour using resources such as the pegboard. Children explore lining up the pegs in straight lines using different coloured pegs to create patterns. They systematically fill up the space on the grid like structure. Children are at ease with the use of numbers. They show good subtraction skills when singing "10 green bottles". Staff skilfully extend the activity to include number recognition by using large cards with number signs and a visual representation of the quantity of the objects. Some children demonstrated very good understanding of the activity and answers very quickly. Children are also learning to count during every day activities such as, counting the number of plates handed out at snack time. They also count spontaneously during play.

Children are familiar with the use of information technology equipment. They know how to operate the computer to complete age-appropriate programmes. They use the equipment

confidently and show good mouse control as they follow voice instructions to click and move the cursor around. They also know how to use cameras and handle binoculars appropriately during play. Staff used digital camera to capture images during play. These are displayed at child level for children to see and recall previous learning. Children ask staff to take photos of them to put on cards they make for special occasions such as the birthday of a close relative.

Children have opportunities to explore different types of natural and constituted materials during play. Staff provide corn flour, sand and water to make "gloop". Children are enthusiastic and fully involved, exploring the touch and consistency of the mixture with their hands and mixing spoons. They express their creativity freely through drawings and painting and explore the use of different colour paints. Children have active imaginations and recall and they engage in spontaneous imitation role play by themselves and also with others. They use the well equipped social corner to act out their observations and experiences during free play.

Staff have very good understanding of the Early Learning Goals and they plan and provide a wide range of interesting activities to meet children social needs and to help them progress along the stepping stones. Recent topics include activities that help children to understand their individuality, their families and making choices. Staff make regular observations of children and record their progress in their individual profiles. All plans are flexible and are implemented according to children's developing learning needs. Also, taking into account the wide range different backgrounds and cultures they are from. Staff evaluate activities and use the information to inform future planning. Some recent activities in the Caterpillar room have not been evaluated. Systems are in place to establish links and teacher support from a local school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive and are happy in the Playcentre as their individual needs are met exceptionally well through staff's holistic approach care. They have developed innovative systems for contacting parents and have established supportive professional relationships which benefit both children and parents. Parents share the relevant information about their children's needs which ensure that each child is treated in an individual and knows that they are valued. This is reflected in the way that children are acknowledged and affirmed and the confidence they show as they play. Staff have created a culturally rich and inclusive environment using welcome displays and play resources such as books dolls and puzzles. Learning about others included in all periodical activities plans. This month, children's awareness of the celebrations of Christmas and Hanukah is promoted through displays.

Excellent systems are in place to promote development and learning of children who have additional needs. A knowledgeable and enthusiastic Special Educational Needs coordinator is in post to support children and parents and to help staff to develop and apply suitable learning methods to meet stated needs. Individual Educational plans developed, implemented and reviewed as appropriate. Staff have access advice from outside agencies if necessary and there are links and a system for sharing information with the coordinator from a local school.

Children behave well as a response to the well structured play environment and a positive approach by staff. On arrival, children in the pre-school are settled by a group time activity of

reflecting and sharing news. They know that they must listen and only speak when holding the special object.

Behaviour is also managed by offering children choices and by sharing information with them. For example Children choose the area they are going to play in at the beginning of the session so they know what they are going to do. Staff provide a visual timetable so children know the timing of activities. They know what is happening next and comply with the routine. Staff are good role models for children. They offer patient explanations and treat children with respect. Children have a sense of right and wrong and will challenge their peers who display unacceptable behaviour.

Children have continuity of care as staff work in genuine partnership with parents and promote their active involvement in their children's learning. They have feedback at dropping off and collection times and regular contact and information sharing with key group workers. Information is also shared during parents evening. A comfortable room is available for parents to sit in if they need to come into the Playcentre to discuss issues concerning their children.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding.

Parents know the topics and learning aims well as current activities plans are displayed on the notice board for parents to see. Parents allow children to bring and show toys or objects connected with the topics. Staff provide learning diaries between home and the setting for parents to record their comment. Sticky labels are provided for parents to record their observations of their children play patterns at home. Parents are able to discuss instead if they prefer. Books are available for children to use at home though a book lending service operated by staff.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. They are encouraged to think about new life. For example, new born babies are brought in by parents. They also consider the life of plants. Staff provide bulbs for children to plant in pots and observe the change and growth into flowers. Some bulbs are kept in the cupboard in the dark. Staff encourage children to reflect on the reasons why new life did not happen and the importance of caring for and looking after living things. Moral awareness is fostered through behaviour management and children are developing a clear understanding of different cultures through activities which recognise festivals and celebrations.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a well trained and committed staff group who have a strong loyalty to the children and parents in the community. As well as level 3 qualification in child care, some staff hold qualifications in community development and in counselling skills. The Development manager has a MA in Early Education and Care and has extensive knowledge of the childcare networks and policy making structures and systems in the city. She attends various meetings and is aware of current childcare initiatives both on a local and national level.

All staff are safe to be in close contact with children as Criminal Record checks have been completed for all staff. The manager keeps a list of the checks. Other evidence and personal information is kept in the main administrative offices of the Settlement. Staff are not allowed to enter the childcare rooms unless they have completed the checking process.

Children have sufficient attention and support as the adult to child ratio maintained in all areas of the Playcentre. There is a current surplus of staff on some days as staff from the new Children Centre at Barton Hill School are present in the nursery to observe children who will be transferring to that setting next term. All staff are deployed well to meet the needs of children. The key group system is in place and staff are fully aware of their areas of responsibility. Students have generally good supervision. They know how to interact with the children and have a named supervisor who oversees their development. Records of attendance maintained for

both children and staff. These are clearly written and are kept up to date by staff who are in charge of the base rooms

The operational plan is set out in a clear easy to understand document accessible to parents. It contains all the required policies, aims and staff structure. More comprehensive policies are available in the manager's folder kept in the office. These are primarily for staff awareness but parents can see them on request requested Records of children and their parents and carers are appropriately developed, maintained and systematically filed. Additional management records such as general policies of the Settlement are generated and are stored in the main offices. The manager understands the need to inform the regulator of significant changes and events.

Leadership and management is good.

Childcare team led by a highly qualified and experienced Development Manager and the senior staff team. A clear leadership structure is in place with all staff knowing their roles and areas of responsibility. Staff are managed in a very empowering way and have opportunities to feedback their thoughts and ideas for improvement. Weekly senior staff meetings are held and the manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the group who are continually seeking to improve the quality of care.

Staff have regular opportunities to attend training courses. Many have completed the National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 whilst working at the Playcentre. Records of essential training such as first aid is kept in the main office. Staff are notified when it is time to renew their certificate. Training information sent to the centre for staff and parents who may be interested in completing short courses or job training. The setting meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, staff agreed to recommendations to improve the outside play area to provide children with sufficient interest, challenge and stimulation. They also agreed to improve safety in the playroom by ensuring that the hot tap is suitably regulated.

Staff have now created a vibrant and interesting outdoor area where children have several areas for active play, gardening and also enclosed areas to sit or to enjoy imaginary play. Children wash their hands without risk of harm as all hot water taps are appropriately regulated at safe temperature and do not become too hot.

At the last inspection of nursery education, staff agreed to increase children's access to programmable toys to support their understanding of communication technology. They further agreed to develop assessment systems to promote children's progress.

Children now have access to a range of battery operated items which they use during free play. They also operate the storytelling machine to listen to stories through ear phones. Children have good understand of the purpose and uses of the computer. Staff set up programmes in their presence and children complete them independently. Staff have now improved the systems for assessing children's progress. They record observations of children learning and record them in their individual profiles. These are shared with parents and are used to plan children's development.

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 Standard. The provider is required to keep a log of complaints made by parents which they can see on request. The complaints log 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.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- improve procedures to promote children's good health and ensure that the first aid box is kept in the designated area and is accessible for use
- improve the procedures for meeting children's dietary needs and ensure that temporary staff comply with the arrangements for serving food and drink

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 improve teaching and learning in the nursery and ensure that planned activities are evaluated and the information is used to support future planning.

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