



Douglas Valley Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY288401
Inspection date	25 September 2006
Inspector	Victoria Gail Halliwell
Setting Address	Douglas Valley Children's Centre, Turner Street, Wigan, Lancashire, WN1 3SU
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Registered person	Governing Body of Douglas Valley Children's Centre
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Douglas Valley Children's Centre registered with Ofsted in 2005 and operates from purpose built premises close to Wigan town centre. The centre provides a breakfast club, lunchtime care and after school club for children over three years. Nursery sessions run from 09.15 to 11.45 and again from 12.45 to 15.15. Holiday care is also provided. Full day care is provided for children from birth to four years. A maximum of 108 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open each day from 8.00 until 6.00 for 51 weeks of the year. Children have access to two fully enclosed outdoor areas.

There are currently 170 children on roll. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

In addition to the head of the centre, the nursery employs 24 staff to work directly with the children. Of these one is working towards a qualification, all other staff hold appropriate early years qualifications to Level 3 or above.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted, because staff consistently implement good hygiene procedures. For example, ensuring individual bedding is provided and placing sleeping children top to tail to help prevent the spread of infection. Children are learning from an early age about the importance of regular hand washing. Children under three years are becoming increasingly familiar with routine procedures and know they must wash their hands before snack and after toileting. Well resourced and easily accessible bathroom facilities promote children's independence and make routine experiences enjoyable. For example, children under two years enjoy looking at themselves in the mirror whilst they wash their hands and are able to select their own paper towels. Children over three years are learning about the possible consequences of poor hygiene. During adult led discussions, children think about what would happen if they never had a bath or shower.

Staff ensure children have sufficient opportunities to rest or sleep. They respond to individual needs, for example, one child who is tired but reluctant to lie on a sleep mat sits quietly with a staff member. The child curls up on the settee and drifts off to sleep whilst the staff member gently stokes her hair.

Children are provided with regular meals and snacks in accordance with their age and hours of attendance. However, meals are often processed, for example, fish fingers, frozen potato waffles and beans. Many children bring a packed lunch. Parents are given some advice to promote healthy eating, such as including fruit rather than sweets, chocolate and fizzy pop. The contents of children's packed lunches are not refrigerated. Children are able to help themselves to water at all times. A jug and cups are provided for children over three years, whilst younger children have individual cups appropriate to their age and stage of development.

All children benefit from playing out in the fresh air and sunlight which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Children over three have continuous access to an interesting and challenging outdoor environment, whilst younger children enjoy regular planned opportunities for outdoor play each day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and their families are warmly welcomed into a stimulating child centred environment. Children, particularly over three years have a very strong sense of belonging. They enter the nursery with confidence and quickly explore their surroundings before selecting their preferred activity. Younger children are equally encouraged to make choices about how they spend their time, a wide range of play materials are stored at low level in all area's to promote independent

selection. A clear plastic container and photographs are well used so that children can easily identify the contents of each container. All rooms are well equipped with high quality furniture, equipment and play materials in accordance with children's stages of development. For example, a very low level wooden sand tray is provided in the youngest baby room, sand trays then increase in height throughout the nursery. Domestic style settee's provide good opportunities for children to relax in comfort whilst enjoying stories and also provide a stable base for babies to pull themselves to a standing position. The absence of blinds or curtains at the windows in the baby and toddler rooms, causes some discomfort for the children, particularly on very sunny days.

Children play and move around safely under the direct supervision of staff. Very good systems are in place to ensure staffing levels are maintained and staff are effectively deployed to keep the children safe. Routine inspections of the premises are completed daily by the caretaker and formal risk assessments are undertaken annually. Documents have been devised to monitor the visual inspection of the premises and outdoor area by staff, however these have not yet been implemented. Very good systems are in place to ensure the centre is secure and effective. Procedures are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. Effective procedures are in place should a child become lost or uncollected, however staff knowledge is not fully reflected in the written policy.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff, who have a clear understanding of their responsibility to implement the setting's child protection policy. As a result of training and induction procedures staff are able to identify possible signs and symptoms of abuse and take appropriate action to protect children from possible harm. A copy of the settings child protection policy is routinely given to all parents and clearly informs them of the nursery's duty to report any concerns they may have.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children throughout the nursery are happy and enjoy their time at the setting. Many children have formed strong attachments with staff members and seek them out on arrival. Children who are new to the setting are developing good attachments, the gradual admission process in the baby unit effectively supports children as they make the transition from home into nursery. Parents of new children are encouraged to complete an informative booklet which includes photographs of important people in their child's life, what makes them happy or sad, their favourite story, song or comforter. Such information enables staff to respond to individual needs, providing toys which are more likely to interest a child and encourage them to leave their parents.

Children have excellent opportunities to explore textures and enjoy tactile experiences which stimulate their senses. Babies' routinely complete body-art using their feet, hands and arms to paint. Feely boxes containing a wide range of objects, such as metal tins, whisks and spoons are routinely provided under direct supervision, so babies' can experience different textures and sounds as they bang on the tins and feel the smooth metal surface.

Pre school children have access to an excellent range of continuous provision which promotes their learning in all areas. Children are motivated by an exciting range of activities. They move purposefully around the room exploring the workshop area where they can build junk models, make collage pictures with feathers, straws and foil shapes or model play dough. All areas are exceptionally well resourced, for example, the mathematical area contains resources to promote counting skills, sequencing, mathematical language, weighing and measuring, colour and number recognition. A selection of related books are also well presented in this area.

Staff support children well, they are enthusiastic about child led activities and use spontaneous opportunities to promote children's learning. For example, a child asks for a story the staff member follows the child outside and sits on the mat. She proceeds to tell the story, skilfully asking questions which encourage the children to think about what has happened and what will happen next.

The outdoor area has been imaginatively designed and provides a wealth of natural learning opportunities. The children confidently explore the willow tunnels, investigate the wood pile, hide amongst the trees and examine the leaves of the sunflowers for caterpillars. The discovery of a caterpillar leads to an informative discussion about the life cycle of the butterfly as children recall the story of the "Hungry Caterpillar". A range of wooden structures promote children's physical development as they balance along the wooden planks, attempt to walk along the rope bridge or climb the tree trucks to give themselves a vantage point to observe their peers.

Throughout the nursery staff plan well for children's learning. They maintain informative and interesting records of what children can do and use these to plan for the next stages in children's learning. For example, development records relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework, show a photograph of what the child can achieve alongside a written statement stating what a child has achieved.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals, as stated in the nursery's handbook staff recognise that all different types of family can successfully love and care for children. Children are encouraged to appreciate diversity. Play materials and posters which reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability are available. Staff encourage parents to share details of children's experiences at home and provide opportunities for children to reflect and share them in nursery. For example, one parent shares details of a Hindu celebration, 'the festival of nine nights'. She explains they danced each night in traditional dress, in response to staff interest the parent offered to bring in photographs. The staff spontaneously plan a dance session based on the child's experience at home. Staff support children with learning difficulties well, they work closely with parents and external agencies to develop individual plans for children's future development.

Children are well behaved within the setting, pre school children respond well to the high expectations staff have. They play harmoniously together waiting for their turn and sharing resources. Staff implement a consistent approach throughout the setting. They use the symbol of a smiley sunshine and explain to the children that everyone will be happy if we are kind to

one another and take turns. Staff skilfully use positive language, for example, shall we see if we can walk carefully instead of instructing the children to stop running.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are encouraged to enter the setting and observe the range of activities available. Parents of new children often stay and observe for a short time, until their child becomes absorbed in what they are doing. Parents are well informed about their child's time within the setting. A daily diary is maintained for younger children and parents of pre school children receive a weekly diary, which contains details of forthcoming events and suggested play based learning activities for home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The management of the provision is good. The current management structure is strong and well organised. They are well informed and continually increase their knowledge of early years issues. Attention to staff training and qualifications is very good and effective systems are in place to identify staff training needs. Routine team meetings and internal briefings or training sessions ensure all staff are aware of new practices and are able to implement procedures consistently.

Effective recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted and have the necessary skills and experience to work with young children. Detailed induction processes are followed to ensure that new staff are able to undertake their duties competently. Staff deployment is good. Staff to child ratios routinely exceed the required minimum, as a result suitable contingency arrangements are in place to cover unexpected staff absence.

An extensive range of documentation, policies and procedures are implemented to promote children's welfare and development. Information regarding the nurseries operation is well organised, known by staff and accessible to parents. A new committee has recently been established to improve the process for reviewing and devising new policies and procedures.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the 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 any 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

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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):

- review the lunchtime menus to improve the range of healthy options served to the children, also seek advice from environmental health regarding the storage of children's packed lunches
- consider blinds or curtains to increase children's comfort in the baby and toddler room
- develop the procedure to be followed in the event of a child becoming lost or uncollected to fully reflect staff knowledge and practice.

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