

Mere Green 0-5

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY275763

Inspection date 21 March 2007

Inspector Susan Rogers

Setting Address Mere Green Community Centre, Mere Green Road, Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands, B75 5BT

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Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day care, Sessional 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?

Mere Green Pre-School opened in 2003. It operates from a large hall on the ground floor of the Mere Green Community Centre. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 25 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 64 children aged from two to under five years on roll. This includes 12 funded children. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens five mornings a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00. An additional afternoon session is provided on Wednesday between 12:30 and 14:45.

The setting employs nine members of staff. All of these hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority. Silver and Gold Quality Assurance Awards have been attained.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The mostly effective routines protect children against illness and infection. For example, children regularly wash their hands after craft activities and before meals and snacks. Their understanding of how to effectively wash their hands is promoted by staff who remind them to wash the backs of their hands. However, the toilets are not always flushed and this compromises children's health.

Children are well-hydrated and are learning about the benefits of drinking regularly. There are ample opportunities for them to enjoy drinks with their snacks and when they are thirsty. Children enjoy food that meets with their different dietary needs since staff are aware of their different requirements and children bring their own lunchtime food from home. The storage of children's snacks is well-organised as these are kept a cool place. Children eat their meals in a positive social setting, sitting together at a table with staff. They are learning about the different nutritional benefits of the food they eat. They have opportunities to cook food that they enjoy, for example, an adult-led activity involved children making jam tarts.

Children are well protected if there are any concerns over their health as most of the staff have a current paediatric first aid qualification and are confident of their reactions if there are concerns with children's health. There is an effective sick child policy which protects children against contagious illnesses. Children are very well protected in the summer as they play in the shade and have sun protection cream applied. Their welfare is well monitored as they play in temperatures that are conducive to their positive development: staff monitor the temperature of the room and ensure the room is well ventilated.

Children develop excellent control when they use tools and equipment. They use a vast assortment of practical equipment that includes paint brushes, scissors to cut out shapes, containers to pour sand and stick using glue. Children notice the changes that occur in their bodies when exercising. They develop their larger physical skills, for example, they crawl through tunnels and hoops of different sizes and use their balancing skills to walk along platforms and narrow beams. They are mindful of other children while they propel wheeled toys. They are very aware of the space they need to explore and fully experiment with their larger movements during activity songs. They enjoy challenging activities demonstrating skill whilst they catch and throw beanbags through vertical hoops. Their highly-developed coordination skills help them participate well in action songs and group activity sessions such as jumping in and out of hoops.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are exceptionally well protected as a result of the efficient risk assessments. Their self-esteem is thoroughly promoted as a consequence of well maintained and attractive premises. The room is light, airy and well ventilated. The space is exceptionally well organised and furniture is easily readjusted throughout the session to accommodate a variety of different activities. For example, this is moved aside allowing children to enjoy a physically challenging activity session. Children's learning is actively promoted since the outdoor area is frequently used to promote outdoor learning opportunities.

Children's safety is a high priority: all points of entry are secure and the entrance and communal areas are protected by closed-circuit television. Children's learning is extended since various aspects of the building are used to provide interesting learning opportunities. For example, children are frequent visitors to the library which is situated on the first floor of the premises.

Children's play is well promoted as the premises are very well used. For example, staff ensure that there are a variety of activities arranged to inspire and promote their interest. The free-flow system, where children access activities of their choice, fosters children's sense of independence. The toilet facilities provide children with privacy but also allow staff to help less able children contributing to their positive sense of self-esteem.

Children are very well protected since staff are exceptionally vigilant and monitor their play at all times. They have a thorough understanding of children's individual abilities and, therefore, adjust their levels of monitoring to ensure they do not encroach on their need for independence but can ensure that they are safe. Children are very well protected if there are any concerns regarding their care as staff have discussed their obligations with parents, have attended training and are aware of aspects of a child's care that would cause them concern.

Children's learning is actively promoted through the wealth of interesting, well-maintained equipment and toys. For example, there are a wide range of reading books, construction equipment, dressing up resources and creative play equipment. Their development is encouraged as they independently access the wide range of stimulating toys and equipment, that are maintained in a safe condition.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's communication skills are very well promoted through well-chosen aspects of conversation. This ensures they understand new words and confidently communicate with each other. Their comprehension is encouraged as conversation is always aimed at their level and, therefore, is easily understood. Children are confident and readily access activities. Their confidence is further encouraged by the free-flow activities where children sample several activities of their choice. Children learn quickly as they are exceptionally well supported by a high ratio of staff who promote their enjoyment and understanding of activities.

Children's contribution to their learning is valued and their opinions are actively sought regarding their preferred activities. Their continued involvement in activities is promoted as staff utilise an effective checklist to make sure that all children participate. Children happily separate from their parents as the room is attractively presented and staff are very warm and welcoming. Therefore, their curiosity is promoted as they readily play with a variety of attractively presented activities. Their development is actively promoted as staff know the individual progress of each child and, therefore, meet their individual needs.

Children learn quickly as the activities are well-planned and thoroughly encourage their development in all areas. Consequently, they approach their activities with great enthusiasm. For example, they respond quickly to changes in activities knowing that these will be exciting. Children enjoy a strong sense of security as they have developed a close understanding relationship with the staff.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The well-qualified staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and demonstrate this through their confident and imaginative teaching styles. Staff consistently extend children's knowledge and development by promoting creative and stimulating learning opportunities. The recognition that children have different starting points when they enter the setting is reflected in the initial assessments. Several areas of learning are promoted throughout each of the teaching sessions.

The planning of the curriculum is extensive, it covers the Foundation Stage and provides a focus for children's individual needs. The planning is regularly reviewed as a consequence of regular staff consultation sessions. Children's development is encouraged as a consequence of challenges that are sensitive to the needs of the less-able children but are interesting and exciting for the more-able children. For example, younger and older children play with sand; the older children are beginning to understand the concepts of volume and capacity and the younger children enjoy the sensation of sand trickling through plant pots. Individual play plans are compiled to assist the individual needs of children. Time and resources are exceptionally well-managed as each of the sessions are well planned with a good balance of adult and child-led activities. Children's assessments are thorough; staff evaluate children's abilities and follow the Foundation Stage framework. Staff have a thorough knowledge of children's abilities and reflect this in their individual assessments. Staff use successful teaching methods. For example, a common theme is reflected throughout many of the activities which promotes children's understanding and interest.

Children successfully used their number skills for practical purposes. For example, they count how many children are present and calculate how many cups are needed at snack time. They are becoming familiar with the concepts of addition and subtraction, establishing how many children are left during action songs. They experiment with the concepts of volume by pouring sand in and out of containers and calculating how many spoonfuls are needed to fill containers. They recognise different mathematical shapes and confidently use language that allows them to differentiate between different shapes and sizes.

Children are mostly independent they skilfully wash their hands and put on aprons for craft activities. However, the routines at snack and mealtimes impede children's greater independence as staff are over helpful. Children enjoy taking responsibility, for example, they collect their name cards, tidy away toys and concentrate well during group sessions. They listen well to instructions and apply this to their play activities. They cooperate well, recognising that organisation is beneficial to their enjoyment.

Children recognise their names, and confidently form letters that contribute towards their name. For example, they form recognisable letters on the back of their art work ,therefore, they are using text for a purpose. They have opportunities to make marks during their creative play activities. They speak confidently, have a wide vocabulary and use this to describe what they are doing. They handle books with care and enjoy accessing books for pleasure. Children listen well during group story sessions and give suggestions regarding the possible outcome of the story. They recognise that books are a source of factual information.

Children learn about how things grow, regularly caring for flowers they have planted in pots. They discuss aspects of their lives outside the setting and successfully use construction equipment to create a variety of different structures. For example, children make cars from construction equipment and then test out their effectiveness. They discuss why and how we use practical objects and give solutions to problems. They are learning about the concept of time and relate this to the time of day that they are collected.

Children become thoroughly engrossed in creating images of their choosing, using a variety of interesting mediums that include play dough, junk modelling, mathematical shapes, glitter and roller paints. They confidently involve other children in their creative play scenarios and sing songs from memory, accurately matching movements to music during action songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are highly committed in their promotion of children's positive behaviour and encourage their self-esteem by employing effective strategies. Children behave well as they are frequently praised by staff. Staff are sensitive to the individual needs of the children and promote their positive behaviour through explanations and appropriate responses. Consistent praise encourages children to enjoy their activities, strive further and achieve positive results.

Children behave well as the wealth of different activities are stimulating and ensure their energies are well directed into meaningful learning opportunities. They are encouraged to take responsibility within the setting. They help clear away toys following activities and carry toys outside for outdoor activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children offer equipment and toys to others and are considerate of other children's needs.

Children are learning about different traditions and cultures through a variety of books, toys, equipment and activities that depict the wider world. They are learning about different traditions through explanations and activities that provide them with further understanding. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given appropriate care since staff have related training and experience, and therefore are able to care for their individual needs. Children's individual play needs are sensitively handled through individual play plans. The comprehensive assessments ensure children's progress is well monitored so that parents are informed of any concerns. Their continuity of care is encouraged as parents are encouraged to contribute towards a gradual settling-in process which is individual to the child's needs. For example, parents spend time with their child in the setting when they commence their placement. This promotes children's self-esteem as they consequently, separate well from their carers.

Children progress well as a result of the first-class relationship that staff have built between themselves and parents. Their development is encouraged as there are several strategies used to exchange information on children's progress. These include informal discussions, written assessments and a well-resourced information board. Their development is encouraged as parents' input into the running of the sessions is greatly valued. Children's continuity of care is promoted since the documentation relating to the setting is available to parents at all times.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with good quality information through a well-presented brochure that explains the purpose of the Foundation Stage. Information is provided on a daily basis so that parents can keep in touch with their child's activities. Parents are encouraged to continue with their child's education in the home setting through good quality information regarding the activities. Parents are encouraged to help at the setting through a well-organised parents' rota. Individual consultation sessions keep parents well informed of their child's progress and provide parents with ideas of how they can support their child's development. Children progress well as their parents' contribution towards their education is greatly valued. For example, parents who have specific knowledge are encouraged to participate in the sessions by discussing aspects of traditions and festivals or particular life skills. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed as they describe aspects

of the children's activities within the setting and advise parents of how they can include this in the home environment.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well protected as all staff who have unsupervised contact with the children are fully vetted. Effective strategies ensure that parent helpers and newly appointed staff are supervised whilst they have contact with children. Children's welfare is considered as there is an effective induction procedure where staff become familiar with working practices and policies.

Time and resources are well-organised, consequently, children are consistently engaged in meaningful activities. For example, the successful planning ensures that activities are frequently changed, and therefore encourages children's development through a broad variety of learning experiences. Children progress well as a result of excellent staff delegation. All staff are confident and easily take the lead in story sessions and activities. Children's welfare is promoted since all staff consistently develop their professional practice through training. Children learn quickly as effective organisation and a high staffing ratio ensures that children have consistent staff support.

Children's development is consistently encouraged since staff are highly skilled and committed to promoting good quality childcare. Their progress is furthered as a result of strong skills provided by staff who readily recognise children's individual potential. Children's sense of security is promoted through the efficient organisation of sessions. Each session is exceptionally well-managed with designated times arranged for different activities. Therefore, their development is actively encouraged as they benefit from regular routines that offer enjoyable challenges. They actively explore and investigate as a consequence of the well-organised space which enables participation in a variety of stimulating activities.

Leadership and management is good. Staff meet regularly to discuss and evaluate the provision for Nursery Education. The evaluation process assesses the success of each individual activity and provides a focus for children's individual needs. The setting is committed to improving the care and education of children by ensuring that staff have the necessary skills, training, commitment and aptitude to accommodate children's individual needs. Monitoring the provision for Nursery Education is successfully promoted through consistent evaluation. Children's learning is well promoted as all staff demonstrate good quality teaching styles and are committed to encouraging children's learning. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was required to make sure the documentation provides sufficient information to keep parents and staff well informed, improve the nutritional value of snacks and improve and develop the facilities for outside play. Children's development is now well promoted as both staff and parents are well-informed of all documentation, snacks now provide improved nutritional value and there are now suitable facilities for outdoor play.

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

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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):

- promote children's health by ensuring that toilets are regularly flushed.

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):

- promote greater opportunities for children's personal independence.

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