

Soho Surestart Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY334364
Inspection date	04 April 2007
Inspector	Jackie Nation
Setting Address	Louise Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21 0RY
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Registered person	Birmingham City 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?

Soho Sure Start Children's Centre opened in 2006. It operates from a purpose-built nursery building and serves children in the local community and surrounding areas. It is situated in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 60 children aged from birth to five years may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 all year round, except for bank holidays.

There are currently 53 children on roll. Of these, 16 three and four year-old children

receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are nine members of staff employed at the setting, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 3 or degree level.

The nursery receives support from the Early Years Advisor, Early Years Teacher and the Birmingham local authority early years service.

The Children's Centre offers training for parents, stay and play sessions, advice and drop in sessions, outreach work, health and family support and parents groups, determined by local needs.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing an awareness of good hygiene practices. They know when its appropriate to wash their hands and staff encourage children to do this independently. For example, before meal times and prior to cooking activities. Babies and toddlers become familiar with hygiene routines whilst having their nappies changed or when having their faces and hands cleaned at meal times or after creative and messy play. Staff set a good example to children as they follow effective procedures and practices and promote good standards of hygiene at the setting. For example, staff ensure that effective procedures are in place for changing nappies, cleaning equipment and providing individual bedding for children, this helps to minimise any risk of cross infection. High standards of cleanliness are maintained in the nursery.

Children's health care needs are appropriately met and staff work in partnership with parents, for example, if a child requires medication, has an accident, or becomes unwell. Staff are trained to administer first aid and written parental consent has been obtained to allow staff to seek emergency medical advice or treatment. This promotes children's well-being and welfare.

Children are well nourished and enjoy a range of healthy meals and snacks. Their individual dietary needs are well known and catered for, and healthy snacks and meals are prepared in a well- organised kitchen. The preparation of nutritious meals is a priority, a Nutritionist supports the nursery to ensure meals are well-balanced. The nursery also seeks parents views and thoughts about the nursery menus. Good attention is given to children with specific dietary needs and procedures in place to ensure children's needs and parents requirements are met. Mealtimes are a sociable and relaxed occasion, staff sit with the children and eat lunch together. Although drinks are provided at meal times and snack time, drinking water is not accessible to children throughout the day to ensure children are sufficiently hydrated. Children's specific requirements or allergies are recorded.

Daily routines and activities ensure a good balance of energetic play and opportunities for children and babies to rest. Babies' sleep routines are effectively accommodated as staff follow the child's individual routine. Older children can also have a sleep after lunch or continue with their play. Babies are able to be physically active and staff ensure they have room to practice, rolling over, crawling, standing and walking. They are encouraged to reach out and move towards toys and equipment. All children enjoy exercise and develop a positive approach to this through regular opportunities for indoor physical activity and outside play. Children take part in a range of activities outdoor, such as negotiating the path on their bikes and scooters, this helps promote their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's welfare and well-being is fostered in the setting. The premises are welcoming to children and parents and offer children access to a range of activities which promote their development. Children and parents are warmly greeted by staff. The environment is child orientated which helps to provide children with a sense of belonging. Resources and activities are set out very attractively and this makes the playrooms look inviting and interesting. There is an excellent range of equipment throughout the nursery. The children can access this freely and safely because it is in a good, safe condition and in low accessible storage. Children enjoy the freedom to move around and play within the very safe boundaries. Displays of the children's work recognise and value their achievements. This helps to support children's learning and as a result children are very eager to attend the setting; they separate from their parents and carers with confidence.

Staff have a good awareness of health and safety issues, they are vigilant and supervise the children well. Access to the nursery is closely monitored and all visitors are requested to produce identification and sign the visitors book before entering the nursery. Risk assessments are completed to identify areas of concern and action is taken to minimise risks to children. The manager monitors any concerns about safety and takes prompt action to minimise potential risks to children. The emergency evacuation procedure is practised to ensure children are aware of the need to leave the premises quickly when necessary. Children have a good understanding about safety in the setting, which is developed through good staff explanations, for example, about being careful and using toys and equipment appropriately. Staff regularly reinforce and consolidate children's understanding, for example, staff remind children about the importance of taking care as they move around the room and when they play outside.

Children are well protected and are cared for by adults who have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. A detailed written child protection statement is in place and shared with parents. Staff have attended child protection training and demonstrate a good understanding of their role in reporting any concerns. This ensures children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are eager to attend the setting and they are familiar with the daily routine. Children's independence is promoted through a variety of opportunities and they have good self-care skills. Children are fully involved in a wide range of enjoyable activities, which develop their mathematical thinking, imagination, language and creative development. For example, sand, water, role play, dressing-up, construction, singing, music and movement, arts and crafts. Staff make the environment, the resources and activities fun and meaningful to the children. Most of the activities are child-led and follow their interests, this helps children engage in their play and absorb the learning opportunities provided for them.

Staff caring for the younger children use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well to support their development and well-being. They plan for children's individual needs. Review meetings are held with parents, this keeps them informed of their child's progress and how staff have planned for their child's next steps in learning. Babies and toddlers respond well to the staff's gentle responses, smiles and praise during play, routines and meal times. They benefit from routines which are consistent with their home experiences.

Children interact positively both with their peers and staff. Within the setting there are many opportunities for children to develop their independence and self-esteem as the environment is arranged with activities and resources which encourage this. All children benefit from warm relationships with staff who are interested in what they say and do and give them lots of praise and encouragement. Children play well together, they are learning to share and have respect for each others feelings. Their positive self-esteem is greatly enhanced through staff providing learning experiences which make children feel good about themselves. For example, mirrors are placed at low level where children can discuss the similarities and differences of facial features and individual characteristics.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and competently put this into practice. Planning is flexible, clear and covers all areas of learning in the curriculum. Systems are in place to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. Observations are used to complete assessment profiles and children's progress and attainment records are shared with parents.

Staff know how children learn and plan a good range of activities and experiences to cover all areas of children's learning. Staff question and challenge children's thinking and this helps children make good progress. For example, staff use open ended questions to effectively promote their thinking and set out the room to stimulate children's interest in learning. As a result, children are motivated and make many good links in their learning. The rooms and resources are well organised, the opportunities for children to self-select resources and develop their own play is good. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and child-initiated play. Registration time is used well to focus children's attention and encourage children to engage in discussion and learning.

Good emphasis is placed on children's learning in the area of personal, social and emotional development. Most children are self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences in a supportive environment. Older children readily engage their peers, staff and visitors in conversation and play. Staff use registration time effectively to greet each other. Children sing the 'hello song' this helps children to positively interact with others as they learn each others name and shake hands with their peers and staff. Staff talk to children about the days of the week, the date and the weather; they use different approaches to promote children's learning and to consolidate their understanding. For example, the use of a puppet 'Crispen crow' at group time, gains children's attention and helps them to focus, listen and join in.

Good emphasis is placed on developing children's communication, language and literacy skills. For example, by encouraging listening skills, extending their vocabulary, linking sounds to letters and naming and sounding letters of the alphabet. There are good opportunities for children to be creative and practise writing for a variety of purposes. Children enjoy books, accessing them independently, listening to and joining in stories. Children have regular opportunities to recognise and write their name, they enjoy using the writing area and making their own cards.

Children are encouraged to show an interest in numbers and develop the skills needed for counting. For example, through a range of interesting games and everyday activities such as looking at the calendar, the date and time and singing number songs. A good range of equipment

and resources introduce children to mathematical concepts, such as shape and size. Children begin to use language to describe and compare shape, position, size and quantity.

Children are introduced to a range of topics that help to develop their awareness of the environment and the world in which they live. They learn about recycling material and a child set aside the raisins from her cake, saying that she wanted to 'Feed to the birds'. Children know about the uses of everyday technology and are given time to develop their senses and investigate a wide range of materials. For example, they confidently use the computer, sand timers to monitor time, they play in sand and water and take part in cooking activities.

Children enjoy being creative and playing imaginatively, they paint, make models, play with puppets and use musical instruments. Children use their imagination as they create a house outside for the hedgehog. They make suggestions to staff about how the house can be constructed as they experiment with a range of resources. A well resourced role play area encourages children to take on different roles and act out different characters as they play together developing their own ideas. Children are involved in discussions and activities about special events in their own lives and their families. They develop an awareness of the wider society because a good range of positive image resources are available to them. However, the opportunities for children to gain an awareness of a range of festivals and celebrations is limited.

Children's physical skills improve through a wide range of experiences, including access to outdoor play, team games, limbo dancing, balancing activities and bouncing around on space hoppers. They explore different ways of moving around through dance and movement, for example, they shuffle and slither. However, the outside space is not always used to its full potential to help extend children's learning. For example, by using the outdoor area as an extension to the indoor learning environment. Children show an awareness of space for themselves and others as they move around the room. They competently use a wide range of small and large equipment, for example, scissors, paints brushes, play dough cutters, balls, hoops and bikes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy positive relationships with staff and with each other. Children are valued and respected as individuals. Staff know the children well, this helps children feel secure and settled. Staff are aware of children's individual needs and preferences because they work closely with parents at the admission stage to gather and record all the required information. The nursery has a key worker system in place which ensures all children's individual needs are met and that children move along at a pace suitable to them. Children have access to a wide range of positive image resources. For example, puzzles, books and posters promote positive images of race, culture, gender and disability. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Good behaviour is valued and encouraged. Children behave well and listen and respond to requests from staff. They are beginning to understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries and age appropriate methods used by staff. For example by having a quiet word with children and giving them a suitable explanation. Staff encourage children to adopt a caring attitude, listen to each other and share both space and toys. They talk to children about using their kind hands, sharing and taking turns.

There are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff work successfully with parents in identifying children's needs and involve other professionals where appropriate to promote their welfare and development. Staff have experience of working with children with English as an additional language and effective strategies are in place support children's learning.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good quality information about the provision, they receive a 'welcome booklet' which includes very useful information about the nursery. Information relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage is displayed. This is supported by photographic examples of children taking part in a range of activities. Staff talk to parents regularly about their child's progress, planning documents are displayed and parents with younger children at the nursery receive daily written feedback about their child's care, routine and play. Parents speak positively about the provision, they feel confident to talk to staff and management about any concerns or issues that arise. Parents are encouraged to join in the many initiatives which take place at the Centre and within the nursery. Parents and children take part in 'Inspire Days' which help parents to become involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well-organised environment. Staff are friendly and approachable. Children benefit from a committed staff team who are effectively inducted and supervised. A robust recruitment and selection procedure ensure that children are cared for by an appropriately checked staff team. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and effectively implement routines to give children a broad range of stimulating experiences. Staff have a high regard for the children's well being. Children benefit from being cared for by staff who consistently interact with them and give them good support. This helps children feel secure and confident and promotes their well-being and development.

Leadership and management is good. There is a strong commitment to good practice and effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the curriculum and identify any areas for improvement. This ensures children make good progress towards the early learning goals. The setting are clear about their aims and objectives. They are fully committed to improving the quality of care and education for all children and promoting an inclusive environment where every child matters. Staff are committed to continuous improvement and development and there is provision for ongoing professional development.

Children's care is enhanced through efficient and effective organisation. Staff implement policies and have efficient recording procedures in place which protect children's health and well-being. Policy documents are reviewed and updated and parents are kept informed of any changes.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that subsequently required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. Concerns relate to National Standards

2 (Organisation), 3 (Care, Learning and Play), 6 (Safety), 7 (Health). Concerns were raised about frequent accidents, hazards on the premises and deployment of staff. It was investigated at an unannounced visit on 25/10/2006. No breaches were identified in relation to these National Standards, and as a result no actions were raised. Therefore the provider remains qualified for registration.

However, Ofsted found evidence of a breach relating to National Standard 14 (Documentation). Ofsted issued the provider the following action to complete: National Standard 14: Ensure that all members of the committee have appropriate checks in place and the regulator is updated of significant changes. Ofsted is satisfied that the registered person has taken appropriate steps to address the action raised and therefore the provider remained qualified for registration.

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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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):

- ensure all children are able to access drinking water throughout the day.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to use the outdoor play area
- improve opportunities for children to gain an awareness of a range of beliefs and cultures.

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