

Harmood Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337970
Inspection date	26 March 2007
Inspector	Liz Corr
Setting Address	Harmood Community Centre, 1 Forge Place, London, NW1 8DQ
Telephone number	0207 974 1519
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Registered person	Camden Council
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Harmood Children's Centre opened in 2007. It operates from a new two storey building on a housing estate in the NW1 area of Camden. The service is managed and organised in partnership with Camden's Early Years Service and Sure Start. It is funded by the London borough of Camden. The centre opens each week day from 08:00 until 18:00 for 48 weeks a year. It serves the local community and surrounding area.

The centre provides a range of services, including a nursery and crèche, it also offers family support and health services. Accommodation is spread over two floors with a baby room and two toddler rooms on the ground floor, with shared outdoor area. The nursery class is situated on the first floor with a separate outdoor space. Children also have occasional use of a large hall situated on the ground floor. The crèche is situated on the ground floor and has its own self contained outdoor play space.

There are currently 24 children on roll. 12 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and makes provision for those

who speak English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions and some stay all day.

The centre employs a total of 27 child care staff. Most hold appropriate qualifications in early years childcare. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 82 children at any one time. This includes 16 crèche places.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is protected and supported by the clear written procedures in place, which are understood and carried out by staff. There are sufficient numbers of staff who hold a first aid qualification and clear guidelines ensure children do not attend if they are unwell. Therefore, children are well cared for if they become ill or have an accident.

Children are learning good hygiene practices. Staff model good hygiene as they carefully supervise children at hand washing time. Soap and paper towels are plentiful and this gives the older children an opportunity to be independent as they are able to wash their hands by themselves. Staff ensure surfaces are appropriately cleaned before activities and meals and each child has an individual clean sheet at rest time.

Children enjoy fresh air every day and are able to make good progress in their physical development which contributes towards a healthy lifestyle. They have lots of opportunities to jump, climb, run and steer wheeled toys. A separate outdoor area is available for older children and is easily accessed. Staff are well deployed giving the children the choice to go back inside if they want to.

Children are enjoying well-prepared, healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. Meals are prepared on the premises and careful consideration is given to any special dietary needs. Meal times are relaxed and children are given time to eat at their own pace. They are learning about healthy eating as staff explain that salad is good for them and will help them to be strong and healthy. Children have access to fresh drinking water at all times, which is always within reach, if they are thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and welcoming environment. They are warmly greeted by staff as they arrive and are helped to settle into an activity. The premises are bright and attractively decorated. Children have access to an ample selection of toys and equipment including, appropriate furniture for mealtimes and sleeping. Staff are well deployed in the outdoor areas, they closely supervise the children and monitor the steps in the under three's garden to prevent accidents. This has been identified as a safety priority and plans are in place for this to be made safe.

Children are protected by the devised policies for fire safety and evacuation. Fire safety equipment is in place and is regularly checked and maintained. However, the evacuation procedure has not been practised with the children and therefore their safety is compromised, as they are not learning how to keep themselves safe.

Children are safeguarded from abuse because staff have a clear understanding of their role with regard to child protection issues. Clear procedures ensure that appropriate action is taken if there is a concern about a child or, an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young children are developing confidence and self esteem as they have time to explore and choose resources independently. They are given lots of attention and are developing secure relationships with their key workers. Children are gradually settled into the nursery routine and are supported throughout the day. Children benefit from the staff team's calm and consistent approach as they provide reassurance and support when young children are cross or frustrated.

Young children are developing their vocabulary as staff communicate effectively and use strategies including signing, which the children are learning separately during weekly sessions. They are responding positively to music, songs and stories and are beginning to listen attentively. During circle time they enjoy singing 'Old McDonald had a farm'. Each child holds an animal from the song, staff sit closely with the children and encourage them to make the animal sounds. The book area is inviting and well resourced, children are beginning to access books independently and enjoy being read to.

Children are provided with a broad range of toys and resources, including items made from natural materials, making their environment rich and stimulating. They can choose to play in the outdoor area, where creative activities such as, drawing and painting and a variety of construction toys and home corner activities are available. Staff interact well with the children and offer physical challenges as they encourage them to play with bikes, balls and hoops.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have an effective understanding of the Foundation Stage. They work closely to deliver flexible planning that takes account of children's individual needs and interests. As a result, children are provided with a stimulating curriculum and have a positive attitude to learning. Efficient systems have been set up for staff to observe children's progress in all six areas of learning. Focused activities enable them to evaluate and identify the next steps for their learning. They benefit from a well resourced environment which helps to captivate their interest and promote their learning. Imaginative teaching methods keep children interested and attentive. When a new song is introduced, staff sing and model the actions, encouraging the children to join in. The children listen keenly and then confidently take turns, pretending to be animals while they all sing along.

Children are making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They enjoy sitting together at meal times and chatting about their day. They are increasing their independence as they take turns and serve themselves from the selection of food. Staff encourage their confidence as they say "you can help yourself". Children are learning to be part of a group and are developing valuable social skills as they participate in the main topic on 'ourselves and our family'. They share photographs of themselves and their families, from home.

Children are developing their communication, language and literacy skills as they access the inviting and well resourced book area. They listen attentively at singing and story times which are well organised and interactive. They respond with excitement and quickly become involved

in learning a new song about ten little elephants balancing. There are many good opportunities to practise early writing as they draw, paint and access the well stocked writing area. They enjoy drawing and writing with felt pens then folding up their pictures and sealing them with sticky tape.

Children are developing confidence in early maths as they recognise numbers displayed in their environment. They are learning simple addition and subtraction as they act out number songs. They enjoy matching groups of small bears to numbers on cards and are beginning to understand about shape and size as they complete puzzles and place objects in order of size, such as the Russian nesting dolls.

Children are beginning to explore and investigate their environment and are developing a good understanding of the world they live in. They have consistent opportunities to learn how to use equipment such as calculators, magnifying glasses and tape recorders. They are showing an interest in the lives of their friends as they share photos of their families. They are learning about change as staff use activities including, photographs of the children as babies, showing how they have grown and developed. They are encouraged to think about their environment as they are learning the importance of recycling and can easily access the paper recycling box.

Children are making good progress in their creative development. They enjoy creating junk models and staff ensure these are displayed attractively in their room. They are involved in role-play, using a wide range of resources which help to develop their imagination including, dolls, dressing-up costumes, kitchen sets and play food.

Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their fine motor skills, as they learn to cut with scissors and draw with pencils and pens in the writing area. They are also involved in sorting small objects into type and are able to independently pour drinks when they are thirsty.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for because staff are aware of their individual needs. Home visits are carried out and this helps to build successful relationships before children are settled. Children develop confidence and self-esteem as they gain on-going support from their key workers.

Children are learning about the world they live in and the beliefs of other people. An extensive range of resources are available to promote positive images of diversity. Older children are learning to value and respect different family backgrounds through their current topic on 'ourselves and our families'.

There are very good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff work sensitively with families and parents are kept well informed of their progress. Staff have developed good working relationships with other professionals working at Sure Start, who may offer further support to children.

Children are well occupied and are treated with kindness and sensitivity. Staff praise children for their achievements throughout the day. They are frequently praised for good listening. One child is told at lunch time "I like the way you try things", another child is asked "did you choose that child to join you because she is sitting so nicely?". This way of working motivates the children to behave well and their achievements are always noticed. When younger children are frustrated or upset staff are understanding and patient. They help children to name their

feelings and this helps them to feel understood. Consequently, children are mostly happy and well behaved. This positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Younger children benefit from good relationships between staff, parents and carers. Parents receive clear information about the setting and effective information sharing is part of the ongoing relationship. This helps children feel secure and settled.

The partnership with parents and carers is good for older children too. Staff share information about the Foundation Stage at the home visit, this helps to keep parents informed about what their child will be learning. However, staff have not recorded what the children already know and can do at the beginning of the Foundation Stage. This would help to further promote relationships with parents and develop effective practice. Parents are involved in their children's learning, they are being encouraged to provide photos of their families and the children as babies for the current topic. Records of the children's achievements will be shared regularly with parents. Some parents commented that they were very happy with the service and the on-going support from staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a well organised environment where they are happy and involved. Staff provide a secure routine and provide parents with regular updates on their children's progress. Most of the team are qualified and there are on-going opportunities for staff to up-date their knowledge through in-service training. Good systems are in place to ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and are suitable to work with children. This has a positive impact on children's development and enhances the care offered to them.

Staff are well deployed within the setting, this ensures that children receive consistent care and attention to meet their individual needs. Children benefit from the sound policies and procedures that are understood and practised by staff. Efficient records are kept which enable staff to support their understanding of each child. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Leadership and management is good. The manager has a competent understanding of the early learning goals and supports the staff team well to ensure these are implemented effectively. Appropriate training is available for staff and time is allocated for them to observe and assess children's progress. Good communication systems ensure that staff clearly understand their role and plan together to promote and extend children's learning. Staff also make good use of guidance and support is offered by the local authority and the advisory teacher. The manager has developed systems that ensure that a wide range of activities and equipment are provided for all areas of learning. Children have some opportunities to extend their learning outdoors and staff are keen to develop this further.

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 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):

- improve fire safety precautions by practising the emergency escape plan

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):

- improve information sharing to promote partnership with parents by recording what children already know and can do, at the beginning of the Foundation stage

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