

The Embankment Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340904
Inspection date	11 May 2007
Inspector	Hilary Mary Mckenning
Setting Address	The Embankment Children's Centre, Station Road, Thurnscoe, S63 0JR
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Registered person	BMBC
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Embankment Children's Centre opened in 2006. The centre is run by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. It operates from three rooms within the purpose-built Embankment Centre in Thurnscoe, near Barnsley. There are bathroom facilities within each playroom. Each playroom has direct access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. Children access a sensory room within the centre.

The centre may care for 62 children under five years and there are currently 64 children attending a variety of sessions. There are 13 two-year-olds receiving funding for early education as part of the local authority pilot scheme and two children receiving nursery education funding. The centre is open Monday to Friday, from 08.00 to 18.00, throughout the year. The provision employs seven members of staff, all holding appropriate early years qualifications. The centre receives support from the local schools, the community, the local authority and Sure Start.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enthusiastically enjoy a range of activities that contributes to keeping them healthy. They effectively access indoor and outdoor activities on a daily basis to develop their physical skills. They enjoy climbing on the fixed climbing frame and balancing as they walk along the log pathway, as well as playing on the swings. Children manipulate small tools well, such as crayons and chinks. Younger children delight in painting with their fingers and toes to help develop their fine motor skills.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment. Effective methods ensure children develop good personal hygiene practices, such as hand washing before snack and after messy play. They understand the importance of good practice and demonstrate it in their play and reminding each other where the tissues are. However, the procedure for the storage of children's comforters is not routinely followed and compromises children's health.

Staff provide many opportunities for children to talk about being healthy, through the use of projects, displays and planned topics. Older children are developing a good awareness of a healthy diet, as staff talk to them about healthy eating as part of the daily routine. They enjoy 'tasting days' to try new foods, such as a wide range of fruits and snacks. Children demonstrate a clear understanding of their likes and dislikes as they discuss the different snack items, talking about liking the sweet strawberries.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where risks are minimised. They move confidently around the space available, developing their independence and learning to keep themselves safe. Children understand they need to take care when climbing, as staff sensitively remind them of good practice. Regular discussions and topics help children learn about keeping themselves safe and builds on their awareness. Experienced staff effectively ensure that the premises are safe and secure by monitoring all visitors to the nursery.

Children's welfare is protected as staff fully understand their responsibilities for protecting children and how to keep children safe. However, there is no identified process to follow within the child protection policy should an allegation be made against a staff member .

Children make choices from a range of easily accessible activities and resources. Furniture is of a suitable design, conforms to safety standards, and helps to create an accessible and stimulating environment. Well planned areas allow children space to be quiet, use their creativity, extend their imagination and develop their play.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are well settled, happy and secure. They are confident and interested in their surroundings, as they interact with the sensory displays within the centre. They enjoy exploring a range of activities that contribute to their creativity, such as painting and model making. Children under two years enjoy a variety of experiences. For example, they participate in finger

and hand painting alongside older children. The babies listen to rhymes and songs responding with enjoyment as they watch the puppets. Children easily engage in conversation with their peers and adults as their language skills are developing well. Children enjoy their time at the centre. They make satisfactory progress in all areas of development, as staff plan activities and experiences for children. They receive appropriate levels of support. Close and caring relationships between staff and children increase children's sense of trust and their self-esteem.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children enjoy coming to the nursery and are supported by the staff. This ensures children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. Staff have knowledge of the early learning goals and they use this to plan activities to meet the needs of most children. Children use their imagination well during role play activities. They show good concentration skills when using tools and materials, such as glue when making collages and shape-making tools with the play dough.

Children are confident speakers and listen intently to each other when playing in groups and at snack times. They share experiences, talking about home and their families with enthusiasm. Staff listen with interest to what the children say, offering support when appropriate. Children access books and enjoy stories with increasing attention. They are developing an understanding that print has a meaning. Although, there are missed opportunities for children to use writing for a purpose, such as when writing and recognising their names on pictures and their work. Children are very confident and engage well with each other. They welcome visitors, asking why they are there and what they are doing.

Children are beginning to gain confidence in using numbers and they are developing counting skills through sorting activities, singing and ring games. However, opportunities are missed for them to attempt simple number problems in everyday situations, such as working out how many cups are needed at snack time.

Knowledge and understanding of the world is developing as children visit local places of interest and are introduced to different celebrations and festivals through planned topics. Children are sensitive to the needs of others and their behaviour is generally good. They take turns and share, learning how to manage their own behaviour and have respect for others. They recall happy events and experiences about when they were looking for worms and discuss what makes the worms come out to play.

Observation systems are in place that monitor children's progress. These observations are an aid to planning, although there is not always sufficient challenge within activities for children that are more able. Children are guided to make good choices, with staff responding to their ideas and suggestions. Children are developing their independence although this is not always extended into their daily routines, such as at snack times and meal times. Attractive and well-presented displays of the children's work contribute to promoting their self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children build strong and respectful relationships with staff and each other. They show good self-esteem, confidently ask questions and actively make choices. Sensitive staff warmly welcome children. They receive praise and encouragement for achievement and attempts. For example, as children gather toys when helping to tidy up. Children are beginning to take

responsibility for their own behaviour, as they are encouraged to share and take turns. Staff praise children freely, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy exploring outdoors to broaden their knowledge of the environment. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is good and reflects the staff's high expectations. Children understand clear and consistent boundaries, demonstrating care and respect for each other. They help each other by showing less able children how to use equipment, such as when selecting colours to draw worms on the computer by using the mouse. Children follow good role models in staff showing care and consideration for others.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The nursery values and respects parents and a partnership is developing with them so that children's individual needs may be followed. A written daily sheet is given to parents that outlines their child's day. However, information about the educational provision and how it links to the progress that their children are making towards the early learning goals is not readily available for parents. Parents have their own notice board where they can access information, for example, staff details and forthcoming events. The nursery ensures parents are aware of current activities by providing them with information about the current topic. Parents have a prospectus and a welcome pack of the setting. Parents confidently approach staff and demonstrate a high level of satisfaction and support for the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a homely environment that is bright and colourful. The space is organised in a way that allows children to explore freely and access all areas of play. Familiar staff are always on hand to offer support and reassurance. This contributes to children feeling secure and content in the nursery. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures are in place to promote good practice, care and learning which contributes to their well-being. Most permission forms and records are in place, although accident and medical records are not consistently countersigned by parents.

Children benefit from the cohesive staff team who are committed to self-evaluation and improvement of their practice. They share a clear understanding of early years practice through a comprehensive induction process. All staff are appropriately vetted and have suitable skills and experience to work with children. There is an appraisal system in place to identify staff training needs and ensure the policies and procedures are consistently applied.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The organisation and quality of the educational provision supports children's care and learning. The staff team share a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and an appreciation of good early years practice. The planning is completed by each staff group and a key worker system is in place for the recording of observations. 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 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):

- ensure systems for the storage of children's comforters are robust to maintain children's health
- ensure the child protection policy contains the procedure to follow should an allegation be made against a member of staff
- ensure required records are in place and countersigned by parents.

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):

- provide regular opportunities for children that are more able to learn letter sounds and practise writing skills
- ensure staff use spontaneous everyday activities to reinforce mathematical ideas and problem solving to promote understanding of numbers
- consider ways to improve information for parents about the educational provision and how it links to the progress that their children are making towards the early learning goals.

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