

Haslingden Community Link Childcare Services

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	309835
Inspection date	25 May 2007
Inspector	Judith, Mary Horsfall
Setting Address	Bury Road, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 5PG
Telephone number	01706 224848 and 01706 238350
E-mail	info@hcl.org.uk
Registered person	Haslingden Community Link
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Haslingden Community Link Childcare Services opened in 2000. In February 2006 it was designated a children's centre and expanded in September 2006. It is situated close to Haslingden town centre and serves a wide area, with good motorway links.

The centre comprises a day nursery, a crèche to support parents and carers attending the centre and a variety of courses and drop-in support groups for parents, carers and their families.

All services are housed in newly constructed and renovated adjoining buildings with outdoor play areas for the children. The crèche offers a maximum of 15 places and operates as required to support various adult groups that meet in the centre. Children who attend the crèche are mostly under three years of age. An out of school club operates from 07.30 to 08.45 and 15.30 to 18.00. A holiday club runs from 07.30 to 18.00 during all school holidays with the exception of bank holidays. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language.

There are currently 146 children from birth to eight years on roll. This includes 17 funded three year olds and 31 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions including part

time. There are also 16 children over eight years old who attend out of school and holiday clubs. The group opens five days a week for 51 weeks of the year from 07.30 to 18.00.

There are 15 part-time and full-time staff that work with the children. Of these, 12 staff have early years qualifications and two staff members are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

A management council controls the operations of the centre, including the management of the budget and recruitment of staff. There is an overall centre manager. He is supported by a management team, which includes the day nursery manager, a part-time qualified teacher, outreach workers, and domestic and administrative staff. Extended services in the children's centre include pre natal, post natal and family learning activities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The provision ensures the good health of children is promoted through procedures, such as regular tooth brushing and encouraging the children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. The facility is actively involved in interagency initiatives to promote good health, such as National Smile Week, which promotes dental care and healthy eating. The presence of health professionals, such as midwives, health visitors, speech therapists and nurses on the premises, ensures positive support and communication between parents and staff, and thus promotes the health and well-being of the children. Vigorous health and safety policies, including smoking and alcohol, ensure that the children are cared for in a generally healthy environment. However, nappy changing and hand washing procedures are not always fully implemented by the staff which increases the chance of infection. The contents of some first aid boxes are poor and put children at risk.

Children are encouraged to take regular exercise and enjoy dance sessions facilitated by an external tutor from the leisure services department. Through dance and other exercise, such as use of the large indoor fixed play apparatus, children are developing skills, such as balancing, jumping and hand to eye coordination. Older children at the out of school facility benefit from outdoor activities, such as football and chasing games when they enthusiastically participate in self initiated outdoor play.

Children receive suitable quantities of nutritious food which is mainly prepared in the community café based in the children's centre. The staff promote healthy eating and older children are encouraged to help make their own sandwiches which further develops their independence and encourages choice. Bowls of fresh fruit are available in the lobby area for children to help themselves and they are encouraged to take a piece of fruit to eat on the way home which further promotes healthy eating beyond the setting. Parents are closely consulted on individual dietary needs and these are recorded and adhered to in a confidential manner.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a warm, welcoming and friendly environment because staff have spent considerable time incorporating detailed design features, particularly in the newly developed

area of the building which is mainly used for babies and out of school care. These features include under-floor heating, low-level windows and small steps up to the nappy changing area, all of which increase the children's independence, comfort and curiosity. Children relax to recorded classical music which is a regular feature of the setting. Recently the babies took part in 'mini Mozart live' concerts performed by members of a local orchestra. Children develop a further sense of belonging due to initiatives taken by the staff, such as 'All about me' booklets and giving each child a tee shirt and bag on enrolment.

Children benefit from a wide range of good quality, safe, developmentally appropriate furniture and equipment. For example, babies choose from several different types of sleeping facilities including floor mats, pod tents, traditional cots and cushions, and there is a large wheeled evacuation cot in the case of emergencies. Children of all ages freely select from a broad range of accessible, imaginative and challenging toys and play resources, such as the out of school club children relishing play with a large dolls house, whilst the younger children really like to play with sand and water. Outdoor areas are enhanced by the addition of simple items, such as ribbons, which the babies are fascinated by. A wild flower area where each child has planted seeds compliments the hard surfaced play areas, ensuring children enjoy a variety of outdoor experiences.

Children are kept very safe because the facility has robust policies and procedures, such as regular fire drills and strong security systems including swipe cards, entry phones, passwords and closed circuit television systems. Staff have a very positive attitude to safety and remind children of dangers, such as the hazards of running indoors. Trained staff work with the parents on safety issues, such as the correct use of reins, emergency first aid and the use of car seats to enhance the children's safety at home and whilst travelling to and from the setting. Children are generally well protected because staff have an adequate awareness of procedures to follow with regard to concerns about child abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy in a caring environment where their individual needs are valued and respected. They develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem because the staff are sensitive to their preferences and requirements. An example of this is at meal times, when staff demonstrate a high level of awareness of individual children's appetites and favourite foods. The staff work skilfully to create a welcoming atmosphere where children are actively praised and make positive relationships. Younger children benefit because the staff have an understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are beginning to implement this in planning and observations.

Children are beginning to ask questions and use their initiative, for example, pre-school children select an apron without prompting before starting a messy play activity. Staff work hard to create an environment which promotes calmness and cooperation. For example, in the baby unit there is little metal and the environment has been designed to accommodate the needs of babies with features, such as low-level windows, variable lighting, a variety of sleeping options and a soft tunnel through the wall that the babies love to crawl through. Older children at the out of school facility have access to a comprehensive range of high quality resources and are motivated and interested in the activities on offer. At Christmas time, the out of school children held their own Christmas fair and then went to the shops to select new toys with the proceeds raised, developing their independence, choice and mathematical understanding.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is a part time qualified teacher but due to staff changes, other members of staff have not yet been fully trained in the Foundation Stage. The teacher leads the planning for the funded places in consultation with the teacher team in the local authority. The play plans broadly cover the six areas of learning. However, planning is not based on observations of children and therefore does not link effectively between what children can do and what needs to be done to ensure progress towards the early learning goals. Children's development files are not fully used to identify areas for development and to supplement the planning. The teacher has a good understanding of the learning intention of focussed activities and generally supports children well through ensuring appropriate resources are available, and that the activity is well prepared. More detailed recordings are planned to assist the children's progress into mainstream school, and these are being completed for some children. There are few resources with positive images of the wider world, particularly of people with disabilities which restricts the children's learning in this area.

Children are happy, settled and separate from carers with confidence. They have a good sense of belonging to the centre and make firm connections to adults and their peers. Children are supported well by staff in developing a sense of belonging, because they listen while children express their feelings. Children demonstrate confidence as they engage with other people and show curiosity about what is happening around them, such as the inspection taking place. They are being to develop independence in matters of their personal care, such as putting on their shoes and brushing their teeth. Some children talk about their family and pets during play, particularly in the home corner, and also refer to the centre's pet budgerigar. Children enjoy playing with their peers and generally play cooperatively, sharing and taking turns. Children are learning about how to care for living things and each other, as they are guided by staff and explore the life cycle of butterflies and talk about the wild flower garden they have planted. Children have pride in what they do and happily show others when they have made a design or completed a puzzle.

Children are curious and ask questions during play and organised activities, they independently recount known stories and main characters in favourite books. Children handle books carefully and are familiar with the concept of reading across the page and from the front of the book to the back. Children use talk to gain attention and to initiate verbal exchanges with adults and their peers. Staff develop language development by asking open ended questions in a clear manner and repeating new words to reinforce the learning. Children concentrate and listen to each other in small groups, extending their role play into taking on different characters and voices. Some children are beginning to recognise that marks carry meaning while others are starting to write their own names. For example, at circle time children are asked the day of the week and when a practitioner says 'it begins with and F', the child collects the correct card for the calendar. They are provided with the opportunity to do this by staff in areas other than the mark making area, such as making letters and shapes in the cornflour and water mixture. Children use their knowledge of past experiences to describe what is happening or recall what has happened, for example, recalling the process of the life cycle of a butterfly. Through focused activities, such as at registration time, children are beginning to distinguish one sound from another and are able to identify the first letter of their names.

Children are becoming familiar with numbers in a variety of ways, such as counting the numbers of children present in the group each day and counting numbers of plates at lunchtime with members of staff. Number work is reinforced throughout the day by activities, such as playing percussion instruments, when the children repeatedly have to count one, two, three. Some

three year old children are able to count up to 14 consistently, whilst others are aware of numbers but are not able to put them in the correct order between one and 10. Staff also include opportunities for comparison of numbers asking children which is the larger number of two and children consistently answer correctly. Through use of the computer and other games, some children are beginning to recognise groups with one or more objects. Some children are beginning to recognise when objects have the same number, for example, two red teddy bears and three yellow teddy bears.

Children show interest in a range subjects, for example, they enjoy talking animatedly about their favourite foods and holidays. Staff support children well with different activities, such as use of computer and dance, asking questions about what is happening. Children really relish physical exercise on a daily basis and also have the opportunity to use tools of different sizes to develop their manipulation skills. For example, they use puzzles, paintbrushes and craft materials of different shapes and sizes. They are developing hand to eye coordination and are confident at using large equipment, such as climbing equipment, prams and slides.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for by staff who have consistently high expectations of them. Very innovative procedures, such as using small cards on key-rings with pictures of everyday items including apples and spectacles, are used with parents and children who do not speak English as a first language to assist in communication. Staff use many photographs to illustrate children's daily activities and routines, ensuring that parents are exceedingly aware of children's progress. Children are regularly and appropriately praised and relish collecting stickers for good efforts. Children are actively contributing to the life of the setting, for example, they are involved in the recruitment and selection of staff, asking questions and giving their views on the candidates.

Parents are strongly welcomed into the setting to share celebrations, join in activities and talk about their cultural life. This enhanced approach has resulted in members of the local community volunteering and becoming employed in the setting. For example, two local young men have been taken on placement with one of them being awarded 'Student of the Year' by a training board, ensuring the children are cared for by staff who reflect their local community.

Communication with parents is very expertly handled with exemplary methods, such as emails, website, named staff photographs, family fun days, home activity packs and attractive newsletters. Staff have an expert understanding of children's well-being and home life. Adults who care for the children deal with behaviour issues in a consistent, fair manner and the children are polite and well mannered.

Consistently high levels of communication between the setting staff and other agencies, both within the building and externally, ensure that children's individual needs are robustly met. An example of this is the strong links between the setting and groups, such as breast feeding support and autistic spectrum disorder groups, both of which operate in the children's centre. All children are welcomed into the setting, with staff being sensitive to the needs of each child including those with learning disabilities or disadvantages, having undertaken extra training, such as giving injections to diabetic children. Parents are offered a wealth of services and support to ensure the continued well-being of the children and their families.

Partnership with parents is good. The teacher and other education staff acknowledge that parents are children's first and most important educators. Parents are actively encouraged to discuss their children's educational progress with the staff and home activity packs extend this

contact. There are effective settling in periods and parents are encouraged to share their expertise and knowledge with the children.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered because the staff take time to understand each child's individual circumstances and encourage the children to care for each other. Children's immediate family customs and religious beliefs are shared because there are members of staff who speak community language and they can help children and parents settle in.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staffing ratios and good quality registers are maintained to ensure that children are protected. Space and staff are well organised, including the use of a keyworker system, to ensure children benefit from suitable support and resources. Staff training is a high priority, with a high percentage of staff being suitably qualified, ensuring children benefit from practitioners who are knowledgeable in the field of childcare. Documentation and other information is stored securely and confidentiality is maintained.

A variety of groups, involving parents and members of the community, use the facilities during the day and evening. The recruitment and induction procedures are comprehensive, effective and ensure that children are cared for by staff who are appropriately vetted and suitable to provide care. The centre manager has begun to identify the staff's training needs through annual appraisals and regular one to one meetings.

The centre manager has begun to forge links with local health services to deliver and bring together a wide range of children's and community health services. All records, policies and procedures which are required for the management of the provision and for children's well-being are in place and whilst of an acceptable standard, the manager acknowledges that this is an area which is due to be improved.

Leadership and management of the funded education is satisfactory. Recent changes in staff mean that there are new systems to be bedded in and staff are working to consolidate roles and procedures. Staff have little useful information about children's achievement to inform planning, which restricts the children's learning.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the group was requested to ensure that all hazardous solutions are made inaccessible to children and to obtain written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment.

Both of these matters have been addressed and this has improved the safety for children.

There were two issues also raised regarding the education of the children. These were to improve the procedure to ensure observations and assessments inform future planning, in particular to show how children will be grouped, and to improve arrangements for inviting and recording parent's comments on their child's records. Whilst some improvements have been made in these areas, there is still scope for further development to ensure that children's education is well planned and documented.

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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 health and hygiene procedures are adhered to, particularly in relation to nappy changing, first aid box contents and staff hand washing
- continue to review policies and procedures, ensuring staff are informed of any changes.

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):

- continue to develop and promote positive activities and images of people in the wider world, particularly disabled people
- ensure observation and assessment records are completed and used to inform children's learning in consultation with parents.

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