

Surestart Lime Tree Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY338943
Inspection date	24 April 2007
Inspector	Jennifer Turner
Setting Address	Heathfield Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B19 1HJ
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Registered person	Birmingham City 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?

Surestart Lime Tree Children's Centre is managed by Birmingham City Council and opened in 2006. It operates from a purpose built building within the Mayfield School in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. The centre serves the local area and offers training for parents, stay and play sessions, crèches, advice and drop in sessions.

The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 50 children on roll from age three months to five years. Of these, 10 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs nine qualified staff of whom three are qualified teachers.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. Older children know why they wash their hands and require limited supervision while using the bathroom. Babies and younger children become familiar with hygiene routines whilst having their nappies changed or when having their faces and hands cleaned at meal times. Staff ensure that effective procedures are in place for changing nappies and cleaning equipment. For example, children are provided with individual bedding and staff consistently wear disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing. This helps to minimise the risk of cross-infection.

Children's health care needs are well supported with policies and procedures which work in practice, for example, if they become unwell, require medication or have an accident. Parental consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is held and details of their personal care plans are recorded effectively to ensure the quick retrieval of information when required to support children's health and well-being.

Children are well nourished and their individual dietary needs are met well as their meals are prepared by the school. Their individual dietary requirements are discussed with parents on admission, information is recorded and shared with all staff. Younger children are offered drinks throughout the day. However, older children are not able to access drinking water when they want it which restricts their ability to develop their independence. Children enjoy a varied range of nutritious meals and healthy snacks, such as pieces of cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes and celery in addition to the fresh fruit, bread sticks and raisins they have at snack time.

Staff are beginning to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide a good range of physical play experiences for younger children. All children are able to rest, sleep and be active according to their needs. Older children enjoy and learn the importance of physical activity and this is a regular feature of the nursery education provision. This helps to develop positive attitudes to exercise and enhances children's physical development as they use the large outdoor play area to ride bikes, scooters and to develop their skills of climbing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well-organised, safe and secure environment. Children are able to move around safely and freely as the risk of accidental injury is minimised. The setting has good safety and security precautions in place and access to the premises is monitored by electronic door locking devices as well as a receptionist who ensures that visitors to the setting show identification, sign the visitors book and wear a visitors badge to identify them as they are escorted around the building. Children are developing a good understanding about safety in the setting. For example, staff explain safe practices to them, this is particularly evident when children use the outdoor equipment or do not sit on their chairs correctly. Fire evacuation procedures are displayed and practised regularly with the children.

Children use a wide range of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate resources. These are well-organised and encourage independent access. Good procedures are in place for cleaning toys and equipment and checking they are safe and in good condition.

Children are protected from possible abuse or neglect because staff are aware of their role and responsibility to protect children in their care. Staff are aware of reporting concerns to the designated child protection co-ordinator who would then follow through any concern or issues in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The child protection policy is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery and arrive happy and eager to participate in the wide range of activities provided. Those who are new to the nursery are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive to their individual needs. For example, by encouraging children to join in activities and having good interactions with them. Babies and younger children receive lots of cuddles and have a strong bond with their key worker which increases their sense of well-being. Staff spend their time sitting with the children, talking to them and using positive facial gestures as they interact with babies. Children select their own resources with ease. Babies stretch, crawl and challenge themselves to grasp toys they want to play with. They show great excitement as they stretch their arms to reach bubbles floating in the air and they laugh as the bubbles burst on their faces. Toddlers have open access to low-level shelving and staff are developing treasure baskets. This helps them to follow their natural curiosity and build on their own ideas. All children enjoy messy play and they develop creativity and manipulative skills as they paint freely using fluorescent paint and coloured sand.

Younger children are confident in their developing relationships with staff. They begin to play happily together and with adults as they use a range of resources such as puzzles and construction as they build figures from bricks. Staff effectively use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support children's play, learning and enjoyment. For example, staff use aspects of the framework to develop a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for children to become part of a group, encouraging conversation.

All children benefit from warm relationships with staff who are genuinely interested in what they say and do. They give children lots of praise and encouragement. This helps children feel valued and appreciated, which builds their confidence and self-esteem. Staff work directly with the children and give them good support and direction, for example, staff play at the children's level, by sitting on the floor with them or at tables where children may need more help.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have a positive attitude, they are keen to learn, try new skills and are making good progress. They are developing an understanding of number, reading and writing through activities and equipment which are designed to build on what they know and challenge them to explore further. Children have appropriate chances to reflect on others at play and staff support this learning in a positive manner, intervening only when necessary. Children enjoy and choose from a good range of appropriate resources and activities. They have the confidence and abilities to initiate their own play and do so with ease as they move around their play room selecting what they want to play with.

Children are interested in activities and motivated to learn, they speak confidently in groups and individual situations. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's communication, language and literacy skills. For example, by linking sounds to letters and by being able to recognise the letter of the week 'C' for cup, car and cat. Older children are able to recognise

their name from their coat hangers. They enjoy books, accessing them independently and listening to stories and confidently participate in group discussions and answering questions asked by the reader. They enjoy singing rhymes such as 'going on a bear hunt' and are beginning to understand the difference between under and over.

Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a wide range of exploratory and sensory experiences. For example, they enjoy exploring the properties of sand, paint and water as they paint the wooden wall panels with water and watch it dry. Children planted beans and daffodils and each day they observe how tall they have grown. Children count and are learning to recognise numerals to 10. The more able children confidently use these skills with purpose in their play by counting objects and learning numerals towards 10 and some past 10 as well as what number comes after 23, 24.

Staff have a good understanding of the use of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. They gather evidence of children's starting points from parents and are beginning to use their written observation and assessments to assist in planning for the children's learning. However, the assessments do not demonstrate the progress for individual children ensuring that they clearly reflect children's differing abilities and inform the next steps in planning. Children's physical skills improve through a wide range of experiences, including good access to outdoor play, circle games, action rhymes, and by using the soft play room. Children show an awareness of space for themselves and others as they move around the play area. They competently use a wide range of small and large equipment, for example, scissors, paint brushes, play dough cutters, balls, hoops and bikes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals. All children are welcomed into the nursery and their individual needs are effectively supported by staff who know them well. Staff have extensive experience of children with special educational needs and there are very effective arrangements in place to meet their needs. They work closely with parents and other agencies to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities. This helps children feel secure and settled. Children's behaviour is good. The setting has a positive approach to behaviour management and staff encourage children to play alongside each other sharing both space and resources. Children are given lots of praise and encouragement and they respond positively to this and this helps develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Children have access to a range of play resources, posters and books that positively represent the wider community. They enjoy taking part in activities that develop their understanding of their own and other cultures as they follow themes and projects and celebrate a number of different festivals, for example, Chinese New Year. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff work closely with parents to ensure children's daily routines and parents preferences are followed. Sensitive settling in arrangements and a key worker system supports children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. All children benefit from very effective information sharing with parents. For example, through useful information displayed on the notice board, planned parents evenings and daily reports about their child's routine and care. Parents receive relevant information about the provision, the aims of the setting and information about policies and procedures. However, there is insufficient information for parents regarding the Foundation Stage Curriculum and how their children are

progressing along the stepping stones. The setting take appropriate action to address any concerns made by parents regarding the quality and standard of care. During the inspection parents commented particularly on how settled their children are and that staff are friendly and approachable. This has a positive effect on children's development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the commitment and enthusiasm of all staff who provide a well-organised and stimulating environment. The deployment of caring, sensitive staff increases children's feelings of security. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff who are appropriately vetted and staff are suitably qualified and experienced to carry out their roles. Staff to child ratios are well-maintained throughout the day and children receive a good level of interaction. For example, management are supernumerary and support staff when needed. New members of staff are informed about the policies and procedures through effective induction procedures.

Leadership and management is good. They have a clear vision of how they want the setting to be organised and effectively monitor and evaluate the work of the nursery. This helps create a child-centred environment where children are safe, feel good about themselves and make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children benefit from being cared for by knowledgeable staff who are confident with their own and each other's roles and responsibilities.

Staff implement policies and procedures well and have accurate recording procedures in place which protect children's health, safety and well-being. All the required documentation is in place to ensure the efficient and safe management of the provision. Overall children's needs are met.

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 children are able to access drinking water regularly.

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):

- develop the use of effective assessments to demonstrate progress for individual children ensuring that they clearly reflect children's differing abilities and inform the next steps in planning
- improve the information for parents regarding the Foundation Stage Curriculum and how their children are progressing along the stepping stones.

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