

Marsham Street Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	135060
Inspection date	25 September 2007
Inspector	Janet Sharon Williams
Setting Address	121 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4LX
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Registered person	Westminster Childrens Society
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?

Marsham Street Children's Centre was first registered in 1992 and is one of 15 voluntary nurseries run by Westminster Children's Society (WCS). The nursery is on the ground and first floor of a four storey building, that also houses WCS and sure start head offices. There are training rooms, crèche facilities and a childminder/ parent drop in facility on the fourth floor. All floors are served by a lift. The nursery provides a service for families from the local community, which includes placements funded by Social Services. The whole of the premises has recently been refurbished and there is an enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time and there are currently 56 children on roll, of these 16 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery opens each weekday from 08.15 to 18.00 and offers both full-time and part-time places for children.

The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 full-time staff of whom 10 have an appropriate childcare qualification and four staff are working towards a qualification.

Westminster Children's Society is an National Vocation Qualification assessment centre and has been undertaking a pilot scheme for quality assurance. The nursery staff receive support from a speech therapist, psychologist and physiotherapist and also benefit from support from Westminster Children's Society.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and clean environment where good hygiene practices are put into practice by everyone at all times to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. For example, older children wash their hands before meals and staff explain to the children why it is important to clean your hands before meals, such as to remove all the germs. Staff wear disposable aprons and gloves for nappy changing. Although there are effective procedures in place for if a child becomes unwell while at the setting, administering medication and recording accidents, parents have not countersigned details of medication administered.

Children are developing a good understanding of how to eat healthily. They are involved in the menu plan. Their individual dietary needs and requirements are considered carefully, for example, alternatives are provided for vegetarian or non-dairy eaters. All the food provided meets every child's individual need and takes into account the parent's wishes. The children enjoy eating together at the dining table developing their social skills and table manners. Drinks are offered to babies and younger children at regular intervals and older children can help themselves to a drink from the drinks dispenser.

All the children enjoy a wide range of physical outdoor activities on a regular basis which contributes to their good health. They participate in different activities appropriate to their personal developmental stage that help them develop control of their bodies and gain new skills. For example, older children play with bats and balls, are able to run freely and babies are able to pull themselves up and crawl freely indoors and out.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is maintained at all of times. Clear risk assessments are in place, fire and emergency evacuation procedures are maintained and practised on a regular basis, main areas indoors and out are checked to make sure that they are safe and the well deployed staff ensures children are appropriately supervised. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through staff taking time to explain to children and being aware of safety around the setting and to avoid risk and coming to any harm, such as sitting on the chair in a suitable manner.

The premises are bright, welcoming and well maintained. Space available is planned effectively with areas for rest and play. Children have room to move comfortably and resources and equipment are organised to create a stimulating and accessible play and learning environment for children, for example, each play area has a home corner area with a range of play materials, such as dressing up clothes, crockery, cutlery and dolls. Children can sit and look at books and enhance their creative learning through craft materials, for instance access coloured paper, scissors and glue. A range of floor toys are organised such as cars, trains and large and small bricks.

Children are kept safe and protected through staff being aware of their role and responsibilities. Clear procedures are in place to enable staff to know what to do if they have concerns of a child being abused. Most staff have completed a child protection awareness training course.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are fully occupied and stimulated through the good range of toys, equipment and activities provided. They are able to develop and learn through play because staff have a well structured and organised activity plan indoors and out which includes the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage of learning and encouraging children to make their own choice about their play and activity. For example, they enjoy painting; have opportunities to role play, use their imagination creatively constructing models from plain wooden blocks. Children enjoy participating in small groups where they can listen, learn and sing songs. Staff ask older children open ended questions, listen to what they say and play with the children using resources effectively such as dressing up clothes, joining in with all their role play. They also get on the floor to play with children at their own level, and encourage babies to explore the toys around them. Activities encourage children's confidence, self esteem and independence.

Planning for babies and toddlers is sensitive to their individual care, play and learning needs. Routines and activities for children under two allow for indoor and outdoor experiences. They receive cuddles and have a strong bond with the staff that care for them, which increases their sense of well-being. There is an effective key worker system in place that enables staff to establish good relationships with children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good because staff have a sound understanding of the early learning goals and stepping stones. Written plans support children's teaching and learning across all six areas of learning. Some older children are involved in the group's planning, making them feel valued. However, some children's progress reports are not up to date.

Children's spoken language is developing well. They listen and take turns when speaking in large and small groups. Children negotiate well during role-play. For example, they play being at the hair dresser's and patiently wait for their hair to be done. Children are very independent. They see to their personal needs such as dressing and undressing, visiting the toilet, washing hands and deciding when to have their drink. At meal times they help serve' clear away the table and as an individual empty their plate. There is good interaction with staff and children; during adult directed activities, staff take time to explain the purpose of the activity. Children speak very confidently to peers and adults in small groups and learn new vocabulary through sounds. Some children enjoy looking at books and listen well to stories that they know well. Stories are used to enhance children's learning opportunities and develop a knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, the animal story of the Lion King children learn about the different animals the sound they make and relate it to their own sense of feelings, such as happy and sad. Children also learn about where they come from and learn languages that associate to their own. They enjoy using their senses to explore objects in practical activities for example, water and sand play using various utensils and equipment. They have access to information technology, can competently use the mouse and key board; this is also used as a good learning resource to help and develop children's language and literacy skills and their personal and social development as they sit and talk to each other about what they discover and see on the computer screen.

Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well. They recognise the properties of simple shapes and paint and draw profiles of different sizes. They are interested in numbers and counting. For example, they count the number of children around them and can confidently count up to 10.

Children enjoy participating in exploring sounds, and have opportunities to play musical instruments. They play the tambourine and sing a long at the same time. Children express themselves creatively through a range of mediums. They have many opportunities to use their senses and discover varied ranges of materials, use coloured paper and paint. Children's fine motor skills are good they can use small tools, such as knives and scissors to cut and, hammer and nails on the work bench. Children also enjoy large play equipment in the outdoor area giving them plenty of opportunity to practise and develop their physical skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children socialise and form good relationships with their peers. The staff team provide positive role models for the children. They remind them to be nice to each other and are consistent with dealing with inappropriate behaviour. Children also receive regular praise and encouragement enabling them to feel good about themselves and grow in confidence.

Children and staff are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, for example, Europe, Asian, Africa and the Caribbean. Resources and play materials reflect positive images of all aspects of society. This means children learn to acknowledge and accept differences, for example, dressing up clothes, dolls books and puzzles. Children's ethnic groups and background are also used to enhance their awareness of people who are different from themselves. For example, they learn to count in Spanish.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcomed into the nursery. Staff adapt activities for these children, offer additional support so they can experience a wide range of stimulating activities appropriate for their level of ability and that they are fully inclusive to enjoy their nursery day. Staff also formulate individual educational plans to help promote their well being. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the effective partnership between parents and staff. Parents receive good information about what is going on around the nursery, such as activities and events. They are kept informed about their children's progress through daily communication with staff and know their child's key worker. Parents interviewed say they are very happy with the care their child receives; find staff friendly, caring and extremely professional.

Partnership with parents is good. They contribute to an initial assessment of their child, so staff are aware of what level to start the child at, ensure they achieve well and progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are actively encouraged to participate in the nursery's activities including, sharing their home life and experiences. They also contribute to the curriculum topic and show a shared interest in their child's learning and development. Parents are invited to a parents evening to discuss their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff organise the provision well and make good use of space and resources to create a stimulating, orderly and supportive environment for children. Staff are deployed effectively and implement the nursery routines smoothly. Sound recruitment procedures ensure that staff have suitable experience, are qualified and vetted, which ensures children are protected. Most of the staff team hold appropriate early years qualifications. They also have the opportunity to attend training courses, for example, first aid, child protection and an effective and efficient introductory programme.

Staff work well together as a team, clearly identify their role and responsibility and are well supported by the manager. All documentation required and policies and procedures and most of the recommended records are in place and satisfactorily maintained to ensure the nursery is run smoothly and effectively. This contributes to the welfare of the children.

Leadership and management is good. The management team and staff work together closely to ensure that children receive good care and learn according to their age and stage of development. Staff are knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage of learning and use observation and assessments. They also make use of routines, and most activities to promote children's development and learning in the six areas of learning. However, children's progress reports have not consistently been kept up to date. The manager has good knowledge of current child care practices to support the care and learning of children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last children's act inspection the provision was asked to improve hygiene standards by ensuring children wash their hands before snack time. This has satisfactorily been addressed.

The Nursery Education inspection recommend that children's mathematical and communication and language development is sufficiently challenged in their play and daily routine and to provide opportunities for more able or older children to develop their self help skills by serving their own meals and drinks. Throughout the day staff extends children's numeracy and literacy skills to enhance children's development towards the Foundation Stage of learning.

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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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 parents countersign medication administered

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):

- ensure children's progress reports are kept up to date

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