

Lighthouse Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	500127
Inspection date	26 July 2007
Inspector	Teresa Ann Clark
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Registered person	Margaret Hallam
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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

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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 Lighthouse Centre opened in 1991. The centre is managed by the Lighthouse Christian Centre, through charitable funding. The nursery operates out of several areas of the church building, offering full day care, after school and holiday care. The centre is located in the Chorlton area of Manchester. The nursery consists of a large room which can be divided into three separate areas. The baby room is situated on the first floor and the after school/holiday facility use one room inside the main entrance. There is a secure outdoor area for children attending the nursery.

The nursery may care for a maximum of 41 children at any one time. There are currently 31 children on roll. Of these, 12 children are in receipt of the nursery education grant. There are currently 12 children on the out of school register. Children attend the nursery and out of school club for a variety of sessions. The nursery supports children who have additional needs and or disabilities. The nursery also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery is open from 08.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday all year round, except bank holidays and one week at Christmas. After school care is provided Monday to Friday during term times, from 15.30 to 18.00 and the holiday club opens during all of the school holidays, except Christmas from 08.30 to 18.00 Monday to Friday.

There are currently 12 staff, including the manager working with the children. Of these, eight hold recognised childcare qualifications. The nursery receives regular support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises and equipment are maintained to a good state of cleanliness, which helps to promote children's good health. Staff follow effective hygiene practices, as they carefully clean table tops and low chairs after use, helping to protect children. Staff regularly check children's nappies throughout the day to ensure they are comfortable. The staff wear disposable gloves and aprons for changing children's nappies, which minimises the risk of infection. The storage of children's dummies and regular sterilising helps to protect children's health.

Children are developing an understanding of simple hygiene procedures as they wash their hands at appropriate times and are encouraged to do so by staff. Children know that washing hands gets rid of germs. Although babies' bottles are marked with their names, these rub off easily and as a result bottles are not easily identifiable, which poses an element of risk to children's health. Parents give prior written consent to administer medication to children, but records are not kept of medication administered, which means there is no evidence to show that children have received the medication and parents are not able to acknowledge the entry.

The children are provided with healthy, nutritious foods which help to promote their good health and ensure that they are well nourished. The well balanced meals are cooked on the premises using fresh ingredients. In addition, the children benefit from the provision of healthy snacks, such as a good variety of fresh fruit. Children learn about foods and the importance of keeping healthy through planned activities. For example, making smoothies with fresh fruit and yoghurt and children draw their own favourite fruits. Mealtimes are social occasions where staff sit and have their lunch with the children and talk together.

Children enjoy their food and have their appetites satisfied as they know they can ask for more. When babies have had enough, they push their plates away and say 'all gone'. Children have access to fresh drinking water and confidently pour themselves a drink when they are thirsty. Older children are helpful towards the younger ones; they pour them a drink and tell them to sit down in case they spill it.

Every day the children have some opportunity to play outdoors, benefiting from fresh air and regular exercise. In addition, they have regular planned opportunities to visit the local park where they use a range of large equipment, which helps them to develop coordination and control. The large hall is frequently used when children are unable to go outdoors, where children enjoy obstacle courses and music and movement sessions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a safe and friendly environment. They are greeted by name when they arrive each morning and have their own space for their coats, pictures and other personal items. This helps them to have a sense of belonging within the nursery. The premises are maintained to a good standard and have recently been decorated to improve the environment for children. There is sufficient space for children to play, rest, sleep and eat in comfort and safety. Although, the kitchen is cleaned and maintained to a good standard of cleanliness the nursery has not addressed the recent recommendations made by environmental health. These issues pose an element of risk to children's health and safety.

The good quality toys and resources in the nursery provide age appropriate and stimulating play opportunities, which help the children to learn and develop. The toys are clean, safe and well maintained, enabling the children to play safely. There is some continuous provision and resources and equipment are generally accessible, as they are stored in labelled containers. But children rarely open the boxes to help themselves and some boxes are out of children's reach. As a result, children have little opportunity to develop and extend their play ideas play or practise skills they have been learning in planned activities. In the main, children play with toys and equipment that are set out by staff as they are more accessible, for example, children have lots of fun with the dressing up clothes and enjoy playing with the sand and water.

Good attention is given to safety to ensure that the risk of accidental injury to children is minimised. Risk assessments are carried out and measures are put in place to identify potential hazards. The staff supervise the children well and follow the safety procedures to keep children safe. When taking children on outings for example, they take supplies, such as first aid equipment and a mobile telephone, to deal with any emergencies. Regular fire drills are practised with the children so they know what to do in the event of an emergency. Children are learning about keeping themselves safe, as staff remind them not to run indoors and help children to use scissors safely. Children are well protected by the staff who have a clear understanding about the procedures to follow if they have any child protection concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery. They separate well from their parents and wave them good bye. An effective key worker system is in place, which ensures children are cared for by consistent staff who get to know them well. As result, trusting relationships are formed. Children enjoy the nursery activities and enthusiastically take part in what is planned for them. For example, making models with the stretchy dough, where they use their imagination, learn about shape and count the pancakes they have made.

There are warm and affectionate relationships between the staff and children, as a result the children are happy and secure. Children who are new to the setting are given lots of reassurance to help them settle. Children show an interest in what they do and are developing their concentration skills. For example, practising their cutting skills and listening to stories. Staff support the children throughout the day, working alongside them and engaging with the children at a variety of activities and experiences. Staff are developing confidence in using the 'Birth to three matters' framework for planning activities and recording children's development.

Babies and younger children benefit from regular opportunities to play and explore using their senses. For example, when playing with water, paint and dough which they touch, smell and taste. They enjoy looking at picture books with staff and benefit from hearing familiar songs and rhymes, which are made more enjoyable with the use of props. They enjoy playing outdoors where they push toys around and practise their walking skills.

Children confidently explore their environment. They have great fun dressing up. A child dresses up as a bride and says to the other children 'Who's going to marry me?'. Another says 'Look at my beautiful dress'. Children show off their physical skills in the outdoor area, for example, hopping and skilfully spinning the plastic hoop around their bodies. They show pride in their achievements, for example, a young child shouts out to staff 'look I've done it' when he manages to snip a small piece of paper. Another is so pleased with his success when he completes a puzzle, he gives a broad grin to his key worker and applauds himself.

The children attending the out of school club are happy and settled many of the children came to the nursery so are familiar with the staff and environment. They tell the inspector that they enjoy attending, and make positive comments about the provision. For example, 'I like all the activities and playing with my friends, the staff are kind to us'. Children make choices about what they want to do, including whether they want to join in planned activities. Some children are happy to sit and relax, chatting to each other and others enjoy listening to music and dancing. They are taken out daily to the park, where they benefit from fresh air, run freely and use the large apparatus for climbing and swinging.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, a reasonable range of teaching methods and an adequate understanding of how young children learn and progress. Staff plan a suitable range of activities, which cover the six areas of learning and the level of challenge is sufficient to interest children in the activities and enable them to make satisfactory progress. Staff are developing confidence with the new planning and assessment systems, but these are not yet fully developed to make links between assessments and the planning or to clearly show the progress children are making. There is a good balance of adult led and child initiated activities, which ensures children are involved and engaged in purposeful activities.

Children develop a strong sense of community because they have good relationships with staff and each other. They frequently talk about home. For example, a child talks about his mummy having a new baby. They talk with excitement about going to 'big School' in September with their friends. Children are confident in the environment as they explore freely and make some choices about their play and learning. They are good communicators and speak confidently to adults, for example, they ask the inspector 'What's your name?' and 'What are you writing?' They are keen to look at the inspectors identity badge and ask 'Is that you?' 'You look funny'.

Children learn to recognise letter names and sounds and enjoy looking at books. They are learning to write their names and develop their writing skills in planned activities, such as making 'All about me' books. They enjoy listening to the book of the week and join in familiar parts of the story. They are also able to retell familiar stories, such as 'Peace at Last'.

Most children count to ten and above and they recognise and match numbers. They explore a satisfactory range of mathematical concepts, such as weight, measure and size. For example, when weighing ingredients for baking and talking about the height and size of their models.

Children recognise simple shapes, such as circle and square. They use positional language in their play and compare the size of the pancakes and shapes they make with the stretchy dough.

Children are provided with opportunities to be scientific in order to investigate why things happen and how things work, for example, they learn how the smoothie maker works as they press the buttons and watch the ingredients mix together. They use a good range of media, such as sand, glue and paint to make their own pictures and models. These activities prompt children to use their senses and describe how things feel sticky, cold and smooth.

Children have sufficient opportunities to be physically active when playing outdoors and they climb and balance during visits to the park. They use a generally good range of equipment during the course of their activities which encourage coordination and fine motor skills. For example, paint brushes, pens, jugs for pouring and scissors. The programme for outdoor planning is limited so activities in the main tend to be spontaneous. Staff have not developed the outdoor area to provide an interesting place to play or to promote all areas of learning. As a consequence, there are missed opportunities for children's learning to take place outdoors.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Individual children are treated with respect. Their individual needs are known because staff discuss and record information about each child's needs on entry to the setting. Staff ensure they are aware of individual preferences, such as food children particularly dislike. They ensure daily rest and eating routines for babies are influenced by those already established at home. Children with disabilities and learning difficulties are supported well. The staff work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure children's needs are met and that they are fully included in the life of the nursery.

The children learn to understand and have respect for differences. They play with a wide range of toys and books which have positive images of race, culture, gender and disability. They also have opportunities to participate in activities linked to cultural festivals, such as Eid and Chinese New Year, which enhance their knowledge and understanding of the wider world. Children enjoy learning simple sign language and use this with each other. They have opportunities to mix across the age range at certain times of the day, which enables siblings to see each other and helps older children to develop a caring attitude towards younger children.

Children respond very well to the positive approach of the whole staff team, which fosters good behaviour and respect for each other. They learn to share and take turns. They are learning responsible behaviour as they help to tidy away toys when they have finished playing. They are helpful and kind towards each other and enjoy the frequent praise they receive for their efforts and achievements. As a result, unwanted behaviour is effectively reduced. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The staff work well in partnership with parents and carers in order to support the children within the nursery. Information is shared about their day through a diary system and discussion with parents every day, ensuring they are fully informed. Positive feedback was received from parents within the setting as they find staff to be approachable and supportive. Parents value the commitment shown by staff to provide the best care for their children. Parents are generally satisfied with the information they receive and they feel reasonably well informed about their children's welfare and progress. They have access to the settings written policies and procedures,

the registration certificate is displayed for them to see and a complaints log has been established as required.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are informed about the Foundation Stage through an attractive display. Verbal exchanges take place each day about the children, but there are no systems to share children's development records. As a result, parents are not aware of the children's progress and achievements and are not involved in their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staffing levels are organised to ensure that the nursery is within the required ratios at all times and that children have appropriate levels of attention and support. Staff understand and generally follow the setting's acceptable policies and procedures to take appropriate steps to protect children, promote their well-being and support their development. Staff are experienced, suitably qualified and work well as a team.

Adequate procedures are in place to ensure staff working with children are suitable. The manager works extremely hard and is committed to improving the provision. She works alongside the staff on a daily basis, which enables her to get to know the children well. She spends time supporting staff, speaking to parents, monitoring the provision and dealing with telephone queries. Although the manager seeks support from two senior members of staff, on the day of inspection one member of staff is operating the out of school club and the other is on leave. The nursery has been without a named deputy for some time, which means there is no identified person to support the manager or act in the managers absence. As a consequence, the lack of a clear management team limits the setting's ability to move forward and implement change.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager has a good understanding about the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has identified areas for improvement. She demonstrates a high level of enthusiasm and commitment, recognising her responsibility to support staff and develop their roles within the nursery. The nursery value the regular support from an advisory teacher and are acting on the recommendations made. For example, planning and assessment systems are developing steadily. The manager has some action plans which outline her intentions for the near future but the setting have not introduced a consistent method of self evaluation or a system to monitor and evaluate the success of the educational provision.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection three recommendations were made. The provider agreed to ensure records were available regarding the safety of gas and electrical appliances, to ensure the outdoor area for out of school was safe and to obtain written consent for children to be transported in a vehicle.

All records are in place and available for inspection, including those relating to the safety of gas and electrical appliances. The children attending the out of school club no longer access the outdoor area. They are taken to the park most days for physical activities and fresh air. The

nursery has obtained written consent from parents for children to be transported in a vehicle. These improvements contribute to positive outcomes for children.

At the last education inspection the setting was asked to consider improving the systems for recording and monitoring children's progress. There is a new system in place which requires further development. This has been raised as a recommendation at this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted have received one complaint relating to National Standard 7. A childcare inspector visited the provision in June 2005. An action was raised and satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- keep written records of all medicines administered to children and make sure parents sign the records to acknowledge the entry
- improve the system for labelling babies' bottles so they are clearly identifiable
- review the organisation and accessibility of resources to promote children's independent learning (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure there is a named deputy who is able to take charge in the absence of the manager.

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 the planning and assessment systems to ensure children's next steps are identified to inform the planning and records give a clear picture of children's progress (also applies to care)
- develop the outdoor area to provide a more stimulating environment and learning opportunities across all six areas of learning

- develop a system to share children's progress and achievements with parents and provide opportunities for them to be involved in their children's learning
- develop effective systems for monitoring the success of the educational provision to ensure continuous improvement.

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