

Swarcliffe Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	512403
Inspection date	03 October 2007
Inspector	Christine Anne Rice
Setting Address	Langbar Road, Swarcliffe, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS14 5ER
Telephone number	0113 2144161
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Registered person	Leeds City Council
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Swarcliffe Children's Centre has recently been designated a children's centre and was formerly known as Langbar Early Years Centre, which opened in 1993. It is run by Leeds City Council and operates from a purpose built building in the Swarcliffe area of Leeds. In addition to the childcare facilities, it offers the local community a base for other groups to meet and support families. The setting serves children and families from the local area. The children have access to two outdoor play areas.

The setting is open all year round, five days a week from 08.00 to 18.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions, including full days, morning sessions and afternoon sessions. In addition, the centre provides places in the nursery to support adult learning and various drop-in support facilities for parents, carers and their families. The nursery is registered to care for 50 children at any one time. Currently there are 54 children on roll, of whom 14 receive funding for nursery education.

There is an overall centre manager who is supported by a management team which includes the deputy manager, the children's centre teacher, and a senior nursery officer. There are 11

full-time and two part-time staff working directly with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to level three or above and several members of staff are currently working towards further recognised early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by the positive actions of the staff. For instance, the children's parents are contacted if they become ill and the setting operates an exclusion policy for infectious illnesses. Furthermore, children are familiar with the hand washing routine, knowing that they need to wash the germs off their hands before they eat and after going to the toilet. In addition, staff wear gloves and aprons to change nappies and clean the changing mats after use with antibacterial cleaner. Children's bedding is individual and washed daily to prevent cross-infection.

Children benefit from the good arrangements for administering first aid and medication. There are well-stocked first aid kits in each of the rooms and five of the staff have up to date first aid certificates, with several staff booked onto a recognised first aid course. Parental permissions are sought for the administration of medication, according to the written policy, which is fully implemented and shared with parents. All accidents are properly recorded and parents' signatures obtained.

Children eat healthy meals, mainly prepared on the premises by the cooks. Lunch menus rotate and include foods, such as sweet and sour chicken, rice and fresh vegetables. Mealtimes are sociable occasions when the staff and children enjoy a chat. There are fruit snacks which the children help to prepare, as they slice bananas and cut up apples, with more unusual fruits, such as dragon fruit for added variety. Staff are attentive to the individual dietary needs of the children. They are currently monitoring the additive content of foods and observing their effects on the children as part of their commitment to healthy eating. Babies are offered drinks regularly and the other children have access to water some of the time, but are not able to independently and freely access water throughout the day.

All of the children have daily opportunities for fresh air and outdoor play, as they enjoy free flow between the indoor and outdoor areas. They can manage their bodies to create intended movement, for example, they can stop, kick a ball and are able to balance on planks and beams. The children move in a range of ways, for example, children move forwards and backwards on the bikes and are able to weave in and out of obstacles. They are able to judge spaces, for instance, they know that they can fit into the tent, but not the buggy, which they are pushing. The children develop fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination as they use felt pens, paint brushes and rollers and cutters to manipulate dough and clay.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe environment, which is welcoming and friendly, with lots of interesting toys and activities for children to explore. Adults and children are warmly greeted on arrival. Brightly coloured mobiles, plus examples of the children's activities and photographs of the children at play are displayed in the rooms. Information for parents is provided in the entrance

and in the central area, where parents can relax on settees and read the setting's policies and procedures.

Children benefit from the broad range of toys, furniture and equipment, which meets the needs of all children attending, such as cots, booster steps and low chairs. Many of the resources are newly acquired as the setting has just been refurbished. Rotas for cleaning and maintenance are designed to ensure that the toys remain clean and in good condition.

Staff have a good awareness of potential hazards and take positive steps to promote safety. For example, risk assessments are carried out daily to ensure that the outdoor area is safe for the children. In addition, there is a secure entry system, which staff monitor carefully so that unauthorised persons cannot gain entry and children are unable to leave unattended. Children learn to contribute to their own safety as they regularly practise the fire escape plan, which is displayed in all the rooms and recorded. In their play too, children are encouraged to think about safety as staff ask them how high they think they can safely build the bricks.

Children's welfare is protected due to the staff having a good understanding of child protection matters. They have skills in recognising, recording and reporting concerns and are clear about the procedures to follow. There is a written child protection policy, which includes the contact details for the local child protection agencies and is shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff's implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which forms the basis of the planning and assessment systems. Babies receive a great deal of individual attention and are given lots of cuddles, which makes them feel emotionally secure. All children have a key worker, who develops a good relationship with the children and their carers, and is available to discuss any concerns. This helps the children to settle and feel safe, whilst reassuring the parents.

Children independently choose from a good range of activities, from water and sand play to fruit printing, chalking on floor level boards, outdoor play, dressing up, jigsaws, construction, train sets, garages and the home corner. The staff are thoughtful about where they place resources to encourage the children's learning. For instance, there is a toy microwave oven near the dough so that children may extend their play by 'baking' dough cakes. Children are tempted to participate in activities, such as painting, through the staff's energetic and enthusiastic approach. Babies have good opportunities to play outdoors and to explore through messy play, including paint and water. Staff interact well with the children, talking about the cats in the jigsaws, and how they say, 'meow', before praising the children for putting the jigsaw piece in the right place. Consequently, the children are happy and enjoy their time in the setting.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Practitioners, who are trained in the Foundation Stage, provide a broad curriculum, which covers the six areas of learning, but sometimes lacks challenge for older and more-able children. The setting is currently changing its system in preparation for the new Foundation Stage and working towards one where the child's interests are at the heart of the planning. Each member of staff is to take responsibility for a different area of provision. Currently staff are competent in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage, but have the potential to develop further. This is being addressed through

the allocation of a part-time teacher, who is working with the staff to improve the challenge of the curriculum and their skills in its delivery. Assessment records show the children's progress in some, but not all areas of learning, and include some, but not all next steps in learning. This detracts from the overall value of the records, particularly as a useful planning tool. In addition, many activities are monitored and evaluated on observation sheets. However, the effectiveness of these evaluations is limited by the lack of detail, including some missing dates.

The children show that they belong to the setting; they hang their coats on their pegs and leave their carers confidently, soon settling to constructive activities. They have a positive approach to new experiences. For instance, they are keen to make ramps with the recently acquired wooden planks and bricks. The children are proud of their achievements, such as their pictures and make confident attempts to write their names on the back of them. The children are developing a wide range of communication skills, including words and body language. For example, they maintain eye contact during conversations and smile with delight when they arrive and are greeted by the staff. They are able to follow simple instructions, describe the road as 'flat' when the roller goes over it and join in conversations with peers and staff about spiders. Children recall events, such as the man climbing up the pole to 'fix the telephone' outside the setting. They use talk in imaginary situations as they pretend to take their babies in the buggy to the shops. The children enjoy sharing a story in small groups with a member of staff, as they concentrate and maintain their attention.

Staff use natural opportunities to help the children develop their counting skills. For instance, the children count the legs on the spider they examine. They recognise numerals and make numbers for the bikes, such as a three, to match the numbers in the parking bay. Children do their own calculations, working out that there are three children with the same name and then realise that is the same number as their age. They observe positional language as they put the wheelbarrow on the plank, enjoy experimenting with space and measure as they pour water into containers and understand size language, talking about big and little spiders.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they eagerly examine worms and spiders with magnifying glasses. The children are curious, asking the staff if the spiders have ears. The staff encourage the children to think by asking the children if they know of any other animals with lots of legs. The children remember and talk about significant events, such as what happened when they pretended to be an action hero at home. They are interested in the staff and ask them about the baby in their tummy, which prompts staff to plan some learning for the children about babies and new lives. The children have a range of opportunities to develop their creativity. For instance, they play the drums, changing the volume from loud to soft. This leads to their dancing, whirling and twirling with the staff. They explore paints, recognising colours and mixing colours, they hand print and make box craft constructions. Children play imaginatively in the tent, dress up and are able to express and communicate ideas, as they describe the mushy peas as sticky.

Overall, children make sound progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The setting creates a positive, warm and inclusive environment, where all children and adults feel valued and respected, in accordance with its written inclusion policy. Children learn about their community and the wider world through activities, such as walks to see the diggers, plus visits to the local primary school and library. They learn to dance by joining in the tea dance in

the adjacent community hall. Children gain positive images of diversity through access to a good range of resources, such as books, small world figures, empathy dolls and dressing up clothes. Posters and the celebration of various festivals, such as Eid and Divali reinforce this message. Staff successfully dispel gender myths when children talk about crayons in girls' and boys' colours.

Having experience, training and a named Special Educational Needs Coordinator, the setting is well prepared to care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff are committed to working in partnership with carers and professionals to ensure children receive appropriate and good support. The staff manage the children's behaviour positively and consistently, and according to the children's level of understanding and maturity. The setting has a written behaviour management and anti-bullying policy, which is available to parents. In addition, staff work with parents in addressing the management of any inappropriate behaviour. They use distraction for younger children and time out for older children to give them time to think. There is a great deal of positive reinforcement with praise and stickers as rewards. The children are cooperative and have good relationships with the staff; they behave well, help to tidy up, and are polite and considerate. For instance, they kindly offer lunch to visiting adults. Some, but not all, opportunities are used for the children to develop independence. For instance, the children help themselves to mushy peas, but not the fruit salad, which the staff serve. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff use parents' knowledge to help to meet the children's needs and ensure continuity of care, for example, with regard to sleep routines and dietary requirements. There are flexible settling arrangements and the setting is very accommodating in meeting the needs of working parents. The parents receive helpful information about the educational provision through regular newsletters, notice boards and the policy file. Parents have good opportunities to share what they know about their child through discussions with key workers and regular parents' evenings and open days. They are encouraged to be very involved with their children's learning. For instance, parents are welcome to attend bulb planting sessions and to stay and play. In addition, they are invited to view and add comments any time to their children's profiles, which are always readily accessible in their children's room.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting is in a transitional stage, following refurbishment of the premises, plus recent staff changes and some staff absences due to sickness. A new manager has now been appointed and there are plans to have a teacher presence for the whole of the week. Currently there is a teacher in the setting for two days each week. More staff are being recruited, so that gradually the senior management team and a stable staff group is being established. Ratios are maintained and the manager gives priority to ensuring that children in each room are cared for by staff with the required level of qualifications. Inevitably, this creates some disruption for the children as the staff move around rooms, though the effect of this is lessened by the staff's knowledge of and good relationships with the children across the whole provision.

The manager intends to restore the regular appraisal process and is currently reviewing all the setting's policies in conjunction with the staff. Recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are all thorough. For example, at the end of the first day, staff ensure that they are familiar with the child protection policy. Additionally, all required documentation and records, such as the register and the children's information forms, are appropriately maintained. Some of the provision's rooms are under utilised, though the manager is in the midst of an audit and has

plans for development both indoors and outdoors. The staff are flexible and cooperative, working well as a team, ensuring the free flow play system works by following the children outdoors or indoors, wherever they prefer to play. They consistently interact with the children and offer support and encouragement, which helps children feel secure and confident.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The staff team are committed to improving the education of the children, but have lacked direction prior to the recent arrival of the manager and advisory teacher. There are now clear plans to improve the planning and monitoring of the curriculum, as well as the children's assessment profiles. Regular training sessions are being set up for all staff to develop their knowledge of and expertise in the new Foundation Stage.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to display the emergency evacuation procedure, ensure that all toys are well maintained and develop a medication policy.

Since the last care inspection, the setting has developed a medication policy, which is shared with parents. In addition, the emergency evacuation policy is displayed on the wall in all the children's rooms and toys are clean and well maintained. These improvements have a positive impact on the children's health and safety.

At the last education inspection, the setting was asked to develop ways to ensure the continued quality of the provision.

Since the last inspection, the provision has developed the planning system to ensure the quality of the provision. For instance, the free flow system between the outdoor and indoor play has been established and activities are tied into the various areas of learning. These changes are having a positive effect on the children's 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):

- extend the provision of fresh drinking water so that it is available to children at all times

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 children's individual files to show consistently both their progress through all the areas of learning and the next steps in learning
- improve the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation system
- develop more challenge for older and more-able children
- extend opportunities for children to increase their independence, for example, at lunchtime (applies to care also).

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