

Firthfields Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	512419
Inspection date	06 November 2007
Inspector	Abigail Caroline Cunningham
Setting Address	Conisborough Lane, Garforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS25 2LR
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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 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?

Firthfields Early Years Centre is one of many nurseries run by Leeds City Council. It opened in 1989 and operates from six rooms in a single storey, purpose built building. It is situated in Garforth, Leeds. A maximum of 50 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00, apart from once a month on a Wednesday when the nursery closes early for staff training at 16.30. The nursery is open for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 64 children aged from 12 months to under five years on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for early education. Children mainly come from the surrounding areas. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 members of staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a suitable qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority and the emphasis is on learning through play.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Very successful methods for promoting personal hygiene are used. For example, there is liquid soap and paper towels available in the toilets and the staff use different coloured cloths for cleaning different areas. Staff wear gloves and aprons during nappy changing and the changing mat is thoroughly cleaned after each use. Staff and visitors do not wear outside shoes in the younger children's rooms, which prevents cross contamination and also promotes good hygiene practices. The children are encouraged to wash their hands after toileting and before eating and more-able children understand the reasons why. For example, a child was asked, 'do you know why you need to wash your hands before having your snack?' The child answered, 'so I don't have germs on my hands'. The children access the toilet independently and tissues are easily accessible to them, which helps to promote their independence in regards to hygiene routines.

Good arrangements are in place for administering first aid and medication, for example, several staff hold a current first aid certificate. Written policies are in place regarding sickness, accidents and administration of medication, these are fully implemented and shared with all parents.

All staff are fully aware of the individual dietary requirements and preferences in full discussion with parents. The children receive a good range of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks, for example, all meals are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises, such as tuna pasta bake, peas and carrots. A selection of fresh fruit is available to the children during snack time and the children have access to drinks at all times. The children have regular opportunities to sample foods associated with other countries to increase their knowledge of the wider world, such as lasagne, sweet and sour chicken and chicken curry. Mealtimes are a sociable event as the staff sit with the children and they chat happily together. Older children enjoy taking it in turns to help serve the lunch, they enjoy their food very much and confidently help themselves to second helpings.

The children have daily opportunities for fresh air and outdoor play. Older children free flow in and out of the premises and younger children are regularly asked if they would like to go out to play. The children enjoy experimenting with different ways of moving, for example, while using the movement areas. They can manage their body to create intended movement, such as when pouring drinks and pedalling tricycles. A three-year-old pedalled both forwards and backwards while using the tricycle and also managed to avoid any obstacles. The children engage in a wide range of activities requiring hand-eye coordination such as using scissors, pencils and paintbrushes. With the support of staff the children are learning how to handle tools safely, for example, older children know how to carry scissors correctly. They also know that they have to be careful when cutting up fruit at snack time, as one child explained, 'we need to be careful because we could cut our fingers'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The environment is warm and welcoming with good evidence of children's play and activity. Parents and children are warmly welcomed on arrival. Children's work is attractively displayed on the walls and photographs of children at play and involved in a range of activities are on display. The reception area is informative as the setting's policies and procedures are on display.

Staff use most toys, equipment and materials effectively. However, there is no comfortable seating available for staff who spend a great deal of time holding and feeding babies and young children. Also, some of the younger children are not given age appropriate utensils for eating. For example, some three-year-olds are given knives and forks to eat with before they are developmentally ready.

The children are developing an awareness of safety through practising emergency evacuations regularly. The system for managing access to the premises is good, unauthorised persons are unable to gain entry and there is a record of visitors. Children benefit from a suitable range of safety measures, for example, through the use of socket covers. They are supervised at all times, are unable to leave the premises unattended, and are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted. Additionally, the children do not have access to the laundry as this door is kept locked at all times. Older children do have access to one of the storage cupboards. This is because clean cups are stored in this cupboard and the children are encouraged to go and help themselves to one whenever they would like a drink of water. However, this storage cupboard is not free from hazards, for example, some resources are stored in carrier bags and this does pose a risk to the children's safety.

Children are protected from possible abuse or neglect as staff implement child protection procedures which are robust, fully understood and work in practice. For example, the staff are very experienced in working in partnership with social services. They are skilled at recognising, recording and reporting concerns. All staff have completed child protection training and the setting's child protection procedure is shared with parents. This includes what is to be done if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All the children are happy and settled. The staff recognise the children as individuals and meet their differing needs well. For example, the staff have a flexible approach to meeting children's needs. They implement individual routines for resting and nappy changing. The majority of staff working with the younger children have attended 'Birth to three matters' training. They confidently implement the framework and the planning and assessment systems are effective for this age group. Staff are well deployed so that a significant member of staff is available to care for the young children at all times, such as at the beginning and end of each day.

The staff consistently talk to young children, explaining what they are doing and provide the children with positive role models, which encourages them to communicate well with one another. For example, young children successfully learn the names of the other children and the staff. The children also enjoy singing, for example, one child became very excited when it was time to sit down and sing twinkle, twinkle little star.

The children have good opportunities to be involved in a wide range of sensory activities, such as heuristic and messy play. This is throughout all age groups, for example, the children enjoy playing with custard, dough, pasta and sand. A small group of young children also had fun sitting in the water tray, splashing about with their friends.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage which they use to help children develop in most areas. The senior nursery

officer is responsible for monitoring the curriculum and the children's progress and this is done through the use of observation monitoring sheets. However, there are missed opportunities in some areas of learning for the children to develop their skills and understanding, such as communication language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Planning has been fully established and is clearly linked to the early learning goals. Regular meetings are held to discuss topics and activities with all staff, plans are regularly reviewed and evaluations are undertaken.

Activities are accessible and are attractively set out and provide sufficient challenge for the children. Assessment records clearly show the children's approach to learning and their achievements and progress and these clearly identify what needs to be included in planning for children's individual next steps in learning.

The children enjoy counting and are beginning to use size language during play, such as big and little. They can name and match colours and shapes, for example, one child said, 'I am cutting out a pink rectangle'. However, there are missed opportunities for the children to be able to recognise and name numerals and to solve simple mathematical problems.

All children separate from their main carer with confidence, talk freely about their home and community and can independently select and carry out activities, for example, one three-year-old selected paper, pens and sticky tape at the mark making table. The children handle books correctly and are beginning to recognise some familiar words, such as their own name. Some children are beginning to write recognisable letters with a variety of materials, such as chalks, felt tip pens, pencils and crayons. However, the children have limited opportunities to link sounds to letters.

Children are given many opportunities to discuss past and present events in their lives and some children do this with confidence, for example, one child said, 'when I was a baby, I was scared of bonfire night'. There are satisfactory opportunities for children to show an interest in information and communication technology as the children have regular access to a computer. However, because the children have not been out on any recent visits, there are limited opportunities for children to show an interest in the local environment. Overall, children make sound progress towards the early learning goals given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff team are experienced in identifying and working with children with learning difficulties and disabilities. They are committed to working in partnership with parents and outside agencies to ensure children receive good support. For example, regular meetings are held with parents and other agencies and individual education plans are fully implemented.

The staff are good role models and they know the children and parents well. As a result, the children are friendly, cooperative and take a keen interest in visitors. They enjoy receiving rewards for their good behaviour. For example, one child was rewarded for handling a book nicely by being allowed to put a marble in the jar. The children are beginning to understand what is expected of them because the staff are skilled in encouraging good behaviour. As a result, the children are generally well behaved; for example, older children use good manners without being prompted to do so. Some children also show care and concern for others, for example, a child at the snack table, happily shared the last of the milk with a friend. The children

also enjoy helping adults, such as with tidying up, delivering messages and serving food at lunch time.

The children are developing a positive attitude to others. This is achieved through celebrating festivals, such as Hanukah and Chinese New Year. Occasionally, parents are invited in to help with celebrations, for example, during the celebration of the Sikh festival of Baisaki a parent came into the nursery and decorated the children's hands and feet with henna patterns. The children have access to a good range of resources which show positive images, such as empathy dolls, books, jigsaws, posters, musical instruments and dressing up. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff give good attention to meeting the children's individual needs and exchanging this information with parents, for example, through the use of daily message books being completed for the under two-year-olds. The setting's policies are shared with parents as the setting's policy file is available to parents in the nursery entrance. However, the settings complaints policy does not include the name, address and contact number of the regulator. The nursery does have a complaints log, however, a recent complaint has not been recorded in the correct format.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents have good opportunities to share what they know about their child through regular discussions with staff and formal meetings. The various notice boards throughout the building prominently display relevant information, such as staff names and photographs. The parents receive clear information about the educational provision through regular newsletters and discussions with staff. The parents confidently access their child's assessment records and some parents add their comments to these.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Practitioners make satisfactory use of their time and resources to support children's learning, for example, all planned activities are taking place, all areas of provision are well stocked and assessment records are always updated by key workers. All the staff are fully involved in planning, evaluating and developing practice, for example, through staff meetings, planning meetings, supervisions and appraisals. All staff have regular access to relevant training, such as ongoing movement training.

The environment is generally well organised. The staff know their roles and responsibilities and implement most of the setting's policies and procedures successfully. Each session is planned for in advance and the staff are effectively deployed. An established system is in place for staff, student and parent inductions. The registration system is effective and this clearly shows when staff, visitors and children are present, for example, arrival and departure times are recorded accurately. All the required documentation is in place, such as emergency contact and registration details. This information is easily accessible and stored securely.

There are satisfactory ratios in place at the beginning and the end of each day and ratios are good at other times. There is currently no deputy manager in place, however, the senior nursery officer takes charge in the absence of the manager. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last care and nursery education inspection the setting has improved the partnership with parents. The parents are better informed regarding the activities and planning for the Foundation Stage. For example, planning is displayed in a more prominent position within the play room so that parents are able to read this information and the parents also receive regular newsletters, informing them of themes and activities. Parents are also able to take their child's development record home and can add their comments to these. Accident procedures have improved. All children who are brought into nursery by voluntary transport are notified of accidents, as a daily log is sent home at the end of each day. The driver is also notified of the accident and is asked to sign the accident sheet.

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.

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 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 all areas that the children have access to are safe and free from hazards
- provide comfortable seating for staff who spend a lot of time holding and feeding babies
- provide the children with appropriate cutlery during meal times, which matches their individual needs and developmental stages
- ensure all complaints are recorded in the correct format and that the complaints procedure includes the address and telephone number of the regulator.

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):

- provide regular opportunities for children to link sounds to letters, to recognise and name numerals and to show an interest in number problems
- provide opportunities for children to show a greater interest in their local environment

- monitor the curriculum planning, so that there is a balanced programme over time.

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