

Little Hulton Sure Start Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511458
Inspection date	20 February 2007
Inspector	Kay Margaret Armstrong
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Registered person	Salford City Council
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

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?

Little Hulton Sure Start Children's Centre has been registered since 2001. The facility operates from a purpose built building in the Salford area. The Centre opens each weekday from 08.00 to 17.00 for 51 weeks of the year. Children have access to three nursery rooms, the crèche room and community playroom. Two outdoor play areas are available to the children.

The facility is registered to care for 83 children aged under five and 16 children in the out of school facility. Currently there are 63 children roll, who attend for a variety of sessions each week. Of these, 18 children receive funding for nursery education. The centre supports a number of children with learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

There are approximately 20 staff who care directly for the children. All the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are actively involved in activities that relate to good health and hygiene. These are an integral part of the daily routines as they wash their hands frequently and use wipes prior to eating their meals. Children's dietary needs are discussed with parents and these are fully respected at all times. A healthy range of nutritious meals are provided enabling children to learn what is good for them and what should be eaten in moderation. For example, they enjoy Chinese food or fish dinners made from fresh wholesome ingredients, and healthy treats. Children have good access to wholesome meals, fresh fruit and vegetables daily. A recent initiative to grow their own produce is an ongoing development.

Children have a good sense of space as they confidently move around the indoor and outdoor play areas. Whilst outdoors, the children demonstrate good spatial awareness as they steer sit and ride toys with very good coordination. They follow track lines and balance on beams confidently. Large equipment, such as a climbing frame promotes children's physical skills and coordination. Children develop hand-to-eye coordination as they carefully cut with scissors and pour sand and water from bottles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children access toys freely, which encourages them to make choices and to direct and extend their own play. There is a very good range of resources available to the children, including natural materials. Resources are maintained to a high standard, they are accessible and of good quality. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactorily in place and staff are aware of their responsibilities in the event of any concerns arising. The extended services policies, however, have not been updated to bring them in line with the centre's own safeguarding policy. This was in the process of being addressed to ensure procedures are robust and consistent.

Children learn about safety through effective health and safety procedures, which minimise risk significantly. Staff carry out regular risk assessments to ensure the safety of all children. For example, effective staff supervision and the regular practising of fire evacuations. Children keep themselves safe by discussing road safety and by learning about people who help us through activities and visits from fire fighters and the police.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the positive relationships established from the outset with adult carers. This enables them to feel safe and secure to investigate confidently. Children are confident to approach staff, peers and visitors to share their experiences or to ask for support. The children enjoy good opportunities to develop their skills under the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Their progress is recorded under the various aspects and this demonstrates the excellent progress that they are making. For example, they look at and enjoy books and stories together outdoors and enjoy cooking and baking activities. Children participate readily and they are active thinkers and doers. They use materials in different ways to fire their imagination and natural creativity. A good range of creative opportunities enables children to express their ideas using a variety of media, such as junk modelling which allows them to explore colour, texture, shape, form and

space. Children's imagination is extended as they play in the home corner and with small world resources.

The children have many good opportunities to learn with their senses through exploring natural materials. They enjoy transporting resources, such as sea shells, beads and containers around the environment. This helps them to develop physical skills and an awareness of movement. Through the use of mirrors and reflection toys, children are developing a sense of themselves and what they can do. They enjoy many good opportunities to explore the outdoor environment as they dig in the garden, planting and cultivating seeds and observing them grow. They enjoy good relationships with their peers and the adult carers, who are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and organise activities around the children's capabilities, through careful observation.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory as children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Staff generally have a good understanding of how children learn, however, temporary staff have a limited understanding of the Foundation Stage and this means that they do not always move children on appropriately. This results in some children not being sufficiently challenged in some aspects of their learning. The children are happy and settled and the more confident children are beginning to speak clearly and purposefully with adults and other children, as they play in the home corner. They are secure in the routines of the group, understanding that they sit on a chair during circle time as they listen to other children and adults speaking.

Children independently select activities and are able to explain what they are doing to familiar carers. Some children are able to sit for reasonable periods of time and enjoy and handle books correctly. Staff encourage children to use books as a reference point which promotes their understanding of the written word. There are clearly defined writing areas both indoors and outdoors which allow children to practise their skills using a variety of materials, such as chalk, felt pens and coloured pencils. However, mark making materials are not available in other play areas, for example, in the home corner. This limits children's experiences of writing for a purpose. Children are beginning to count in sequence and are developing simple problem solving skills as they sing number rhymes. However, these skills are not consolidated as children do not use them in everyday situations. The children are beginning to recognise simple shapes, such as circles and squares as they complete jigsaws and they gain an understanding of capacity and volume as they play in the messy area.

Children enjoy outings in their locality which promote a sense of place. Visits to the local wooded area searching for bugs, and caring for giant snails within the nursery allows children to develop a positive attitude towards living creatures. Children are keen to use the computer ensuring the volume is turned up and make telephone calls with confidence. However, technology is not used enough to promote children's learning.

Staff work alongside children during play and routines showing an interest in what they do and say. Staff's questioning of children to extend the children's learning is often well developed, however, there are some occasions where temporary staff intervene inappropriately. This results in important learning opportunities being lost. Staff generally have a good knowledge of the children and record comprehensive notes in the children's profiles. However, these observations are not always used to highlight the challenges to be aimed for in order to move children on. This information is therefore, not utilised sufficiently to plan for the child's next steps in their

learning journey. Children enjoy worthwhile first hand experiences where they learn about the world and their community. Staff provide many practical learning activities and they understand that children learn best through play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Friendships are being formed as children play alongside one another and independently. With support and encouragement from staff, children are beginning to take turns and to share resources, as they gain an understanding of other children's feelings. Children are listened to and are consistently praised for their efforts. This increases their self-confidence and develops their morale. Children's behaviour is good and effective strategies are used to manage any conflict. Children are happy and secure. The staff value the children's efforts by displaying their work prominently. The children all participate in activities with confidence and are enthusiastic about learning new skills. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children learn about the diverse world in which we live through a good selection of toys and equipment, which reflect positive images of different lifestyles, and by the staff creating opportunities for them to talk about their experiences. Families enjoy positive working relationships with professionals which leads to good communication and the sharing of knowledge. Parents are happy with the care provided at the centre and express their views accordingly.

Children with disabilities are welcome and are well supported through care plans and activities that are suited to their stage of development and ability. Staff work in partnership with the parents and other agencies to provide for their needs. Children with disabilities are progressing well due to the identification of specific targets and the close liaison with external agencies. Children have a very good awareness of their own and other cultures, which is fostered by the skilful provision of meaningful activities to enhance their knowledge.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive a wealth of information about their child's activities. They are welcomed into the centre at any time and their views are actively sought regarding their child's development. Parents are given opportunities to be involved in their child's learning through written information about the curriculum and by being consulted on their child's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children work and play together in their family groups with a key worker responsible for their individual needs. Each child is allocated to a member of staff within their key worker group. This member of staff is mainly responsible for the child's needs on a daily basis and ensures that information about the children is exchanged regularly with parents. All records and documentation are securely in place and are easily accessible.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum to ensure children make optimum progress towards the early learning goals, is not securely in place. This results in gaps being identified in the nursery education element. A strong influence, is the use of temporary teaching staff, who do not have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage, taking the lead on curriculum planning. Children, however, benefit from most of the staff, who generally work well as a team to develop a shared vision. The management team

support the staff and promote their personal development through training and appraisal systems. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to promote good hygiene practices and to ensure that the behaviour management strategies are consistently applied throughout the centre. The provider was also asked to ensure that the next steps are identified in children's learning and that this information is used when planning for children's progression. The provider was asked to provide a balance of direct teaching and child-initiated activities, and that staff interact with children during play in order to extend their learning. Lastly the provider was asked to ensure that the correlation between recorded attainment and the planning of activities ensure all children make optimum progress and that the systems for monitoring the delivery on the curriculum ensure that a broad and appropriate curriculum is delivered to all children.

The provider has made good progress with most of the recommendations, resulting in a better learning environment that actively promotes children's development, particularly in relation to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, some recommendations continue as areas for future improvement, such as the planning for children's next steps and the monitoring of the curriculum to ensure it is effective and meets children's needs as individuals.

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 all staff are familiar with and adhere to all policies and procedures.

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):

- identify the next stage in children's learning and link this more clearly to the planning in order to promote children's progress

- further extend children's use of mathematical language during daily routines
- review the systems in place for monitoring the impact of the curriculum on individual children's learning, taking account of both their strengths and areas identified for further development.

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