

Seven Trees Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY272664
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Inspector	Angela Rowley
Setting Address	Whalley Street, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 6ER
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Registered person	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day care, Crèche

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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Seven Trees Children's Centre opened in 2005. It is operated by the local authority and provides full day care and occasional crèche facilities from a refurbished building in the Whalley Range area of Blackburn. The centre also provides family support services and on-site links to some health services.

In the nursery, children have use of the whole of the ground floor, which comprises a baby unit, a toddler unit and a large area for children aged three to five years who access maintained nursery education provision. Each area has access to an enclosed outdoor playground. Crèche provision is offered in two multi-purpose rooms on the first floor of the centre or in a larger room in the adjacent community centre.

A maximum of 126 children aged under eight years can be cared for at any one time. At present the setting has 113 children on roll for full day care. There is currently no crèche provision in operation. Children attend for a variety of sessions across each week, including wrap-around care following attendance for nursery education.

A centre manager is employed to co-ordinate all of the centre's provision. In relation to registered day care, an Educare team leader holds responsibility for ensuring that the National

Standards for day care are met. A further 27 staff are employed to work with the children. All staff, with the exception of four part-time assistants, hold an early years qualification in childcare at National Vocational Qualification level 3 or equivalent.

The centre offers care from 08.00 until 18.00 each weekday, with the exception of bank holidays. The crèche will offer sessional care on a planned basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Many positive practices ensure that children's good health is promoted. Children are very well nourished. Good links with the community dietician ensure that all children are provided with a varied menu and also that those with specific dietary requirements are positively supported. Meals are prepared on the premises using fresh ingredients. Further links with external agencies, for example, dental health services, raise children's awareness of good oral hygiene.

High numbers of staff holding current first aid certificates ensure that children in every area of the provision are well protected in emergencies. Procedures for the reporting of accidents and medicines are clear, with minor omissions in the recording process. Children stay healthy through the implementation of a clear health exclusions policy and clear personal hygiene practices, such as hand washing at key times. However, procedures are not as thorough in relation to the cleaning of furnishings and equipment in the nursery, with dirty marks and crusted residue on some surfaces, which increases the risk of infection.

Children benefit from daily fresh air and exercise provided through continuous access to a safe and stimulating outdoor area, which is well planned to reflect all areas of learning.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in well-maintained premises. They are brightly decorated and made welcoming to children and parents through extensive displays of children's artwork and signs in a range of languages. Space is well organised into three main areas so that children's developmental needs are met and they are kept safe. Children in all areas move around freely accessing a good range of continuous provision set out in areas of learning, although space for music and movement sessions is sometimes restrictive. An extensive range of good quality equipment is available and supports children's learning.

Security is given high priority with key-coded entrance systems in place on internal doors, and all external gates secured once all children have arrived. Children's awareness of keeping themselves safe is heightened through planned activities, for example, during safety week. Regular emergency evacuation practices also take place. Risk assessments and daily checking procedures are implemented; however, children's safety is hindered when potential hazards go undetected. For example, a small number of missing socket covers, trailing window blind cords next to cots and nettles in the garden.

Children's welfare is clearly protected. Effective interagency and inter-team working ensures that children and families needs are known and that information is regularly shared to promote children's welfare. Clear reporting and recording procedures are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children come happily to nursery. They are settled and content with a mostly consistent staff team. Strong settling-in and transition systems ensure that staff know children and their families well. For example, staff arrange home visits to some families before children start nursery and, for existing nursery children, staff organise transition visits and meetings to facilitate a secure move to the next room.

A sound key working system ensures that children's developmental needs are planned for. Children's progress is adequately tracked by the staff team, who observe them and record what children can do. Basic links to planning are made by each child's key worker. All children's experiences are broadened as they are provided with a clearly planned range of activities. Children develop independence as they make choices from the wide range of play opportunities available to them. They notice change as they are provided with many good quality exploratory opportunities, for example, melting ice chunks in water to find toys animals hiding inside. Children explore a wide range of other materials in play, which stimulate the senses. For example, shells and starfish, metal pots and pans, mashed potato play and shaving foam.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are fully welcomed into the setting. They are very well supported by good numbers of staff who are well deployed to meet individual needs. For example, some staff are bilingual and support children whose first language is not English. Excellent interagency working facilitates integration for all children. Staff from specialist teams come in to work with children with learning difficulties and disabilities. They plan their visits together in order to ensure a co-ordinated package of support. Clear consideration is given to ensuring that the provision reflects and raises awareness of the lives of children attending as well as the wider community.

Children behave well. Staff sensitively support any children having difficulty managing their behaviour and intervene appropriately. Good strategies are in place to avoid unwanted behaviour through the provision of one to one support at difficult times, for example, during group sessions. All staff praise and encourage children when they do well.

Partnerships with parents are good. Strong relationships have been built informally, which facilitates regular exchanges of information. Good systems are in place to support information exchanges, for example, written daily diary sheets, newsletters and progress meetings with staff. Some information about how the setting operates is available and information is also displayed. Parents contribute openly to make comments, compliments and complaints about the service, which are appropriately responded to. However, confidentiality is breached when summary records available to all parents contain personal information details.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are protected and safeguarded as there are detailed recruitment and vetting procedures for staff. Each staff member is interviewed and selected according to the policies of the local authority. All staff are qualified to level 3 in childcare and have opportunities to update their knowledge and skills through further training. Staffing procedures are in place and include regular meetings, induction procedures, one to one meetings and appraisal. Staff are aware of

their own roles and responsibilities and work together as a team for the safety and well-being of the children.

Children benefit from an environment and practice that is organised to meet their all-round development needs. There is effective use of space and children under three years are in a separate area and can play, eat and rest in comfort and safety.

Children's well-being is enhanced through some clear organisational policies and procedures used for the effective management of the service. Some documents are still at the development stage and are not fully accessible to parents. All required records are in place, up to date and available for inspection. These include attendance registers for staff and children, and medication and accident details. However, the safe management of the provision is hindered when records are not completed in detail, for example, children's and staff's first names only are entered.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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

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.

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):

- improve the assessment of risk to ensure that all potential hazards are identified and minimised, including missing socket covers, trailing window blind cords, and nettles in the garden
- improve confidentiality in the complaint summary records available to all parents
- make improvements to the details recorded on medication and accident records to ensure that children and staff's names are completed in full.

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