

Slade Lane Neighbourhood Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	500181
Inspection date	17 July 2007
Inspector	Sara Haigh
Setting Address	642 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester, M13 0RZ
Telephone number	0161 224 1451
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Registered person	Slade Lane Playgroup
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Sessional 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Slade Lane Neighbourhood Centre in Longsight is a voluntary organisation run by a committee and has been operating for 30 years. It offers Sessional Care for 12 children aged from two and a half to five years, Monday to Friday from 09.15 until 11.45 term time only. Most of the children speak English as an additional language.

The centre also provides an Open Access play scheme for children aged from six to 13 years. The scheme is open during the Easter holiday for two weeks, from 09.30 until 12.00 and again from 13.00 until 15.30 and for the first three weeks of the summer holidays.

Two of the three staff work in the playgroup at any time. One member of staff has completed an early years qualification to level three and another is qualified to level two. Additional staff and volunteers work in the playscheme.

The Centre is a registered charity and works with parents and children from the local community and with other agencies. The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and Manchester Education Partnership Children's Centre teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is protected because staff follow a satisfactory hygiene policy and procedure to ensure that areas used by the children are adequately cleaned. For example, all tables are cleaned before snacks, children are routinely reminded to wash their hands after toileting and messy activities, and before eating. As a result, children's awareness of good hygiene is being promoted. However, children can only access cold water to wash their hands which poses a risk to their health. There are clear procedures for dealing with accidents, such as a fully stocked first aid box and a qualified first aider present. This ensures children receive appropriate care and attention in the event of an accident or emergency.

Children enjoy healthy snacks, which include fresh fruit and breadsticks, to promote their growth and development. Children are offered a choice of water, milk or fruit juice to drink at snack time. However, they do not have free access to fresh drinking water throughout the session to keep themselves refreshed and hydrated. Staff consult parents about children's dietary requirements and ensure they are all aware of these, so children remain healthy.

Children have opportunities for outdoor play where they benefit from fresh air and exercise. They kick footballs, push shopping trolleys and use wheeled toys to develop their strength and coordination. However, there is a lack of equipment in the outdoor area to provide challenges for children. Children engage in activities which successfully nurture their hand-eye coordination and support their early writing skills, such as using rolling pins and cutters in the play dough and paint on the easel.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment, which gives them a sense of belonging. They are warmly greeted by staff and their work is attractively displayed around the setting. Children benefit from space that is generally well organised to allow them to participate in a range of different activities. There is sufficient space for children to play in comfort and safety. The toys and equipment are safe, suitable and meet the development needs of the children.

Children move freely around the provision and are well supervised by staff who make sure children are always within their sight. Children are kept safe due to adequate security measures, the entry system is secure and the outdoor area is enclosed. However, visitors to the setting are not recorded. The setting has a policy and procedure in the event of a child being lost but it does not have one for uncollected children. This is a breach of regulations. Children are learning about keeping themselves safe, for example, when they regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures.

Children are safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. All staff have attended recent child protection training and the centre manager takes responsibility for liaising with other agencies in the event of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy attending the playgroup and they enthusiastically take part in what is planned for them. Staff support children, working alongside them at adult-led activities and engaging with the children in a variety of activities and experiences. Children begin to distinguish between right and wrong as the staff set good examples to the children, such as reminding them about manners and sharing.

Learning opportunities are planned around half termly topics such as, transport and spring. Medium term plans are in place where staff brainstorm ideas and activities. Weekly plans show a daily adult-directed activity which, over the week, cover all six areas of learning from the Foundation Stage curriculum. All staff have completed 'Birth to three matters' framework training but have not yet developed incorporated it into their planning. Spontaneous and planned observations of the children are regularly completed and these form each child's individual 'learning journey' development folder. Children's next steps are identified but they are not used to inform future short term plans and to ensure all adults know what children are expected to learn.

Children confidently make choices about their play, activities and resources from the range made available by staff. Resources are regularly rotated to maintain children's interest and are generally presented at child height, which helps them move towards independence. Children are learning to recognise their names as they self-register upon arrival. They confidently chat to each other and staff as they play, talking about weddings they have recently been to. Children enjoy listening to stories and joining in with action songs and rhymes. Staff extend children's imaginative play as they ask questions about where they are driving to in a pretend car made out of wooden blocks. Children are keen to count beads and sort different sized bears. Some children can name shapes such as triangles and circles. Children enjoy exploring the wooden eggs and fabric blinds in the well-stocked treasure basket. Individual creativity is fostered as children make collages using shiny paper, pipe cleaners and recycled items.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a sense of belonging and feel at ease at the setting, as they are welcomed by friendly, familiar staff. They are confident and develop a high self-esteem and positive self-image. Children are aware of the daily routine and have some opportunities to take responsibilities within this, such as helping to tidy up. The planning, equipment and resources promote children's awareness of other cultures and the world around them. Children learn about other religious festivals and celebrations throughout the year, such as Chinese New Year, Eid and Christmas. Staff promote equality of opportunity as they ensure all children are able to access and engage in the range of activities on offer, provide posters and toys that reflect our diverse society and use language that does not reinforce stereotypes. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The setting supports children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language. Staff work with parents and other professionals to ensure children's needs are met and they are fully included in the life of the setting. Children generally behave well. Staff provide clear and consistent boundaries to help children know what is expected of them and use distraction, praise and encouragement appropriately to encourage good behaviour.

Staff promote relaxed and informal relationships with parents. Information is routinely exchanged as parents and carers talk to staff on a daily basis. Parents have access to information regarding the playgroup via a notice board and written agreements regarding the care and needs of the children are obtained. Parents are pleased with the care provided and that their children are happy in the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from an experienced and consistent staff team who communicate and work well together. Children and families benefit from this continuity. Children are cared for in a small group and staff are developing a key-worker system. Staff generally organise their time and the routine well. However, the organisation of snack time does impact negatively on children's behaviour and sometimes outdoor play is sacrificed if the routine is running late.

Adequate policies and procedures form a satisfactory operational plan to support staff and promote positive outcomes for children. However, the current registration system does not show the hours of attendance for both children and staff. Information on staff's qualifications and training are present but staff files do not include information about their recruitment and suitability checks.

Staff are aware of their roles and are supported by the neighbourhood centre manager on site. Staff attend training where possible, to further develop their childcare practice, knowledge and skills and the setting has support from a local children's centre teacher.

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, the provider was asked to improve the qualification and training of staff; to ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate is on the premises at any one time and that staff have up to date knowledge and information on child protection procedures. The play leader has National Vocational Qualification level three, one play worker has a level two qualification and another play worker is embarking on a level three course in September. All staff have attended training on 'Birth to three matters' and child protection through Sure Start. Flowcharts illustrating safeguarding procedures are displayed in the play room. The centre manager and a member of staff hold current first aid certificates. The setting receives regular visits and training support from Manchester Education Partnership Children's Centre Teacher.

The provider was also requested to improve the methods to ensure hygiene in the toilet area and hand washing. The toilets are checked before and after each session to ensure they are clean and well stocked. Children routinely wash their hands before snack time and after messy activities. Staff remind children about washing their hands after using the toilet and using paper towels to dry their hands. However, children only have access to cold water to wash their hands which poses a risk to their health. Therefore, a further recommendation has been made.

The final improvement was to ensure that the activities available include opportunities for children to investigate, explore and be independently creative. All staff have benefited from the 'Birth to three matters' training to increase their confidence to extend children's thinking and learning. Staff ask children questions, model expectations and share books with them.

Children are able to move around the activities freely and independently access sand play and paints.

Complaints since the last inspection

In January 2007 Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 2 - Organisation. A childcare inspector visited the provision. 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.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- ensure that children have access to hot water for hand washing
- ensure fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- improve the outdoor equipment to provide sufficient challenges
- keep a record of visitors to the setting
- clarify and record a procedure in the event of children not being collected
- develop the planning to include guidance from the 'Birth to three matters' framework where appropriate and ensure children's next steps are used to inform future planning
- improve the organisation of routines in order to minimise negative behaviour
- ensure the system for registering children and staff shows hours of attendance
- update the compilation of staff records to include information about recruitment and suitability checks.

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