



Sure Start Fourways Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY297833 |
| Inspection date | 02 September 2005 |
| Inspector | Linda McLarty |
| Setting Address | Burnage Avenue, Clock Face, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA9 4QB |
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| E-mail | |
| Registered person | St Helens Borough 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sure Start Four Ways Neighbourhood Nursery opened in 2004. It operates from two rooms in a single storey building situated in the Sure Start Centre. The nursery serves children from the local area of Clock Face, in St Helens. A maximum of 55 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 39 children aged from birth to under 5 years on roll. Of these one child receives funding for nursery education.

The nursery opens five days a week, all year round. Sessions are from 08.00 to 18.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also can support children who speak English as an additional language, although none attend at present.

A qualified manager and eight full and part time staff work with the children. All of the staff are qualified, including a teacher. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Well established hygiene routines and clear explanations increase most children's understanding of the importance of washing their hands to maintain good health, although children in the birth to two age range sometimes do not wash their hands before eating. The staff protect the health of young children by maintaining excellent daily routines such as always using gloves and protective plastic aprons when changing nappies, disinfecting tables before use and the regular cleaning of the environment, toys and equipment. This protects children very well from cross-infection.

Children increase their understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle as they eat a diet which includes plenty of fresh produce. Older children visit the local shops to buy fruit to make fresh fruit salad, which provides meaningful opportunities for the staff to teach them about the benefits of a healthy diet. The children's health is safeguarded because the staff seek, value and act on information from parents and carers to ensure that the food they provide meets the children's individual dietary, religious and medical needs.

Fresh water is available on request, and children are learning that they need extra liquid after exercise, or on hot days and this is helping them to learn about keeping their bodies healthy.

Children are encouraged to play outside each day, weather permitting, and enjoy using mobile toys, running about and playing with large equipment. Their health is also promoted by encouraging them to learn to rest or take time out when they are tired, as part of the daily routine.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for the age range of children cared for.

The décor is very attractive, clean and welcoming, with posters, artwork and mobiles displayed at child height throughout the premises. There is sufficient space for children to move around freely and play safely. Children are kept safe because the staff use risk assessments well to minimise potential hazards both on the premises and during outings. Children learn to take responsibility for their own safety because staff gently remind them, for example, to look where they are going when playing indoors and outside. High staff ratios and constant vigilance helps staff monitor children's play effectively, which helps keep children safe from accidents. Well established procedures such as helping children put on sun cream ensures that children are protected when playing outside, and learn about keeping themselves safe in the sun.

Children's safety is promoted well by the regular checking of the wide range of attractive toys, and resources available to each age range. The children only play in the garden after a detailed safety check of the garden and resources and children are supervised at all times.

The children are well protected because staff are suitably vetted and all staff have been trained to have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the care, education and protection of children. Children's safety is monitored well because all staff are trained in child protection, and implement the local and national guidelines regarding child protection procedures effectively.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's confidence and self-esteem is fostered well by staff who make them feel special by welcoming them warmly to the setting and showing their enjoyment of their company.

The 'Birth to three matters framework' is used well to help children become competent learners who make good progress in all areas of their development. Individual care and education plans are discussed with externally involved professionals such as Portage workers, and used very effectively to help children with special needs make progress. Children have sufficient time to complete self-help tasks such as washing their hands, which promotes their growing independence well. They are encouraged to find the equipment they need for self-chosen activities. They creatively adapt existing equipment, for example, making a basket-ball game from an upturned tunnel.

Children are cared for well, with exciting multi-sensory play opportunities sensitively supported by staff, who try to see play from a child's perspective. For example, toddlers who decide to explore the floor level drawing completed earlier in the day have great fun removing and ripping the huge drawing, making a den with it, rolling in it and enjoying the noise it made while tearing. Staff enthusiastically support children using their initiative, which makes children feel special and values their choices, and creates a learning environment in which children can explore, and investigate as they play. Staff encourage children to ask questions, for example, about their shadows.

Babies and young children have access to safe and interesting areas to crawl, enhanced with interesting light effects. They also develop physical skills in a safe outdoor environment, such as pushing and riding mobile toys on the impact resistant surface in the garden. Children's language development is encouraged because staff value what children have to say and spend time encouraging speech. This is enhanced by the use of a booklet written by the manager to help parents communicate with their children, and develop their vocabulary.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are working at, or exceeding the expected level of stepping stones towards the early learning goals for all areas of learning. Children are interested and keen to join in activities because most staff model an enthusiasm for learning which children copy. Children are becoming independent in self-help skills such as attending to their own toilet needs. Children learn about a diverse society through the sensitive use of discussion, topic work and good quality resources which provide positive images of the wider community.

Most staff use questions well to help children think through and express their ideas and this extends the learning which takes place. Children learn that marks have a meaning when they copy the way staff write observational notes on stickers. They enjoy stories, and are learning to recognise the sound and shape of the initial letters of their names.

Children count in meaningful situations as they share out apple slices, and work out how many more are needed. They learn about capacity when filling buckets with sand, or pouring water. They learn about shapes when using different cutters in play dough and when printing.

They investigate caterpillars using a microscope, and plant seeds and summer bedding in the garden. Children learn a simple sense of time through the daily routines, and use of songs, and they visit the local community shops and park, which helps give them a sense of place. Community visitors also enhance the children's knowledge of the local area. Children are learning simple computer skills such as using a mouse to make shapes, or drag items across the screen.

Their physical development is fostered well by daily access to some challenging climbing and balancing equipment outside, and children use a range of mobile toys which offer varying degrees of challenge. They design and make structures to balance on, and are becoming adept at negotiating mobile toys around the outdoor track.

Children enjoy expressing themselves using a range of media and techniques, such as string painting, collage, cutting and sticking and free painting using various objects. They freely access good quality, well-organised art and craft materials organised at their level. They frequently enjoy experimenting with the sounds of various percussion instruments.

The children benefit from the staff's increasingly secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage, and the informed leadership of the room supervisor, who is a qualified early

years teacher. Staff have made a good start at devising manageable plans to ensure that children work towards the full range of early learning goals, and planning is informed well by assessments. Children's work is displayed with respect, but is not dated, which restricts how it can be used to track progress. Staff skilfully help children to develop concentration and persevere with new skills such as riding a tricycle. Staff help children to understand the reasons why certain behaviours are not acceptable, and they model kind behaviour to the children, who copy their good example. Resources and accommodation are used very well to help children gain confidence and independence, and staff work hard to adapt planning to follow the children's own interests, and make the learning meaningful.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met well, and information from parents and carers used well to help staff include all children in activities. Children learn about the needs, views and cultures of others through topics on cultural events such as Chinese New Year, and in sensitive discussions based upon the multicultural posters, books, toys and resources which promote positive images of a varied community.

Children with special needs are supported well, with helpful liaison between staff, parents and other professionals on site, such as health visitors and Portage workers. Individual play and education plans help staff meet the individual needs of these children very well.

Children behave well, in response to realistic expectations and sensitive explanations of the consequences of unwanted behaviour. Most staff have had a recent in-house briefing on a behaviour management programme which the centre offers to parents, which helps them manage children's behaviour in ways which are consistent with that of the children's homes.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. This enhances the children's care because staff seek, value and use information from parents well to ensure that care offered is consistent with that of the home. Parents are given excellent information about the setting, and guidance on care issues. Staff are revising policies and procedures further to try to make information even more accessible to parents. Newsletters and surveys are used well to inform parents and to seek their views about the service offered.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good, and the manager and room leaders work together very effectively to ensure that children receive good quality care and

education. Since coming into post recently the manager has implemented many changes to the organisation of rooms and the way staff work with children, which has had beneficial effects upon the quality of care offered. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the post, and motivates staff by example, as well as by sharing good practice in staff supervision sessions and in staff meetings. The manager supports staff very well, encouraging them to access training and to reflect upon how they can improve their own practice. Children are cared for by suitably vetted adults, and benefit from high levels of support from trained and experienced staff.

The nursery education of funded children is led well by the early years teacher, who is encouraged by the manager to cascade her knowledge to other staff in the team. The manager has successfully identified areas for further development, including strategies to ensure that all staff continue to develop their knowledge of the stepping stones and early learning goals, and develop the good start made in planning. She is aware that replacement staff may be less motivated than the core staff team.

Children's care and welfare needs are fully met and meticulous documentation, countersigned by parents, is kept. Documentation is revised regularly to ensure it gives parents accessible, up to date information which reflects current legislation. Children's records are made available to parents in the entrance hall and assessment information is used well to help parents' know about their children's achievements and progress. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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 that younger children are encouraged to wash their hands before eating.

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):

- continue to consolidate the good start made in planning so that all staff know the learning intentions of activities and continue to develop the knowledge of the staff team working in the Foundation Stage about the stepping stones and early learning goals.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk