

Places For Children

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY336990
Inspection date	18 September 2007
Inspector	Julie Larner
Setting Address	Sure Start, Newbiggin Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE5 1LZ
Telephone number	0191 214 2479
E-mail	
Registered person	Places For Children
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Places for Children Nursery is based within the Sure Start Children's Centre situated in the Newbiggin Hall Estate, Newcastle. The nursery is purpose built on one level and is registered to offer care for 49 children aged from 0 to under 8 years. Children are cared for in an open plan area within smaller groups according to their age and stage of development. An enclosed outside play area is available. The nursery opens from 08:00 to 18:00, for 51 weeks of the year, closing only for bank holidays and the period in-between Christmas and New Year. The setting provides funding for nursery education, however, at the time of the inspection, there were no children attending who received nursery education funding. The group support children with learning difficulties and also support children who speak English as an additional language. There are seven staff working with the children which includes the manager, all of whom hold a relevant qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from opportunities to be active out in the fresh air on a daily basis. Staff challenge older children to extend their skills and learning, for example, hopping in hoops. All children enjoy these opportunities as babies sit happily on blankets playing with rattles and older children zoom around on trikes skilfully. Children enjoy a whole range of activities outside, such as construction toys, due to staff planning the environment well.

Good staff knowledge and procedures ensure that children are well protected from cross infection. Staff follow good procedures, such as wearing aprons and gloves whilst changing nappies and preparing foods. Children who are ill receive good care and attention due to attentive staff who check their temperature if they have concerns and are fully aware of the procedures to follow if children are sick.

Children take care of their own personal hygiene with staff support. Staff sensitively and patiently allow them to wash their own hands and face after lunch, and younger children follow instructions well to do this. Older children independently use the toilet due to the good layout of the environment. Younger children's physical development is encouraged successfully due to staff knowing the children well. Staff have a sound understanding of what children like and because of this, they can meet their needs successfully, for example, by supporting them walking around the setting. Children successfully make choices about their own needs, which are supported well by staff, for example, staff ask children if they are going to have a rest today and respect their wishes if they say no.

Children enjoy meals together, while this is a social time to allow the whole of the nursery to join together it is not successful for all children, for example, babies in highchairs are unable join in with the other children. Raisins and water are provided for snack time and tuna pasta and vegetables for lunch, discussions with staff help children to begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. They talk about getting big and strong by eating their lunch and how this makes their muscles large, however, older children's independence is not sufficiently encouraged during meal times.

Accidents are effectively monitored to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded, for example, monthly reports are sent to head office to monitor any emerging patterns. Medication consents and records are clear to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely and safely around the setting. Staff minimise the risks to children through a mixture of good procedures, such as comprehensive and thorough checklists which are completed twice a day and explanations to the children about the consequences of their behaviour, such as rocking on chairs. Staff's understanding of the procedures in place to protect children, such as checking that visitors have signed in and looking through vision panels before entering the baby room contribute to children's overall welfare. Staff take responsibility for key roles in the nursery, such as health and safety, because of this, consistent and thorough checks are in place to check equipment and maintain the children's safety, such as regular tests of the fire detectors and more comprehensive checks covering all fire safety areas done monthly.

Children are very interested in the equipment and toys that are available and choose from a good wide range that suits their needs and individual development. Babies love looking at the plastic bottles filled with glitter and water and scream with joy as they play in the ball pool. Older children keenly paint pictures of family members and huge crocodiles and persist in completing jigsaws. Children easily move around to different areas and select from a wide range of good quality equipment due to the well organised setting. They make use of all the available areas as they play on the computer and visit the book corner by themselves.

Children are cared for in a bright and welcoming environment. An open plan layout creates a light and airy environment and a welcoming comfortable area ensures that children can rest and play quietly through their own choosing. Displays around the setting of the children's own work shows that this is valued by staff and helps to raise the children's confidence and self-esteem.

Good procedures and staff knowledge about child protection issues helps to safeguard the children's welfare. Staff feel confident in their responsibilities about protecting children and have a good knowledge of the signs and symptoms that would cause them concern. All staff complete child protection training and because of this, children's welfare is maintained.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies enjoy a wealth of interesting and well planned activities, such as play dough. Babies share lovely secure relationships with staff. Staff know the children well which ensures they can meet their needs, for example, by making sure they have their comforters. Children approach staff confidently to receive comfort when they jam their fingers on the trikes outside. Children receive lots of reassurances from staff to settle them into the group as those needing more comfort are carried and reassured by staff to help them feel secure.

Some children are confident communicators. They are keen to share their ideas and talk about their paintings. Children show an interest in numbers, which is often extended by staff as they count the hoops they jump through outside. Children enjoy stories, they concentrate well and some children feel confident enough to offer suggestions about their own family life, such as whether they have brothers and sisters.

Children confidently use their own ideas, which are encouraged by staff. Younger children enjoy painting their hands and take great enjoyment from making hand prints on their paper. Growing independence is encouraged, such as tidying away their plates after snack time and choosing their own toys from easily accessible drawers.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff show an adequate awareness of the Foundation Stage, however, further training would ensure that they gained the clear knowledge of how to implement children's learning in all areas. Whilst children's progress is assessed through a development file this is not rigorous enough to show a clear indication of the next steps in their learning for staff to focus on. Staff show a sound understanding of how to differentiate activities to ensure they are suitable for more able or older children and adequate plans shows how this will be achieved.

In the setting there are plenty of daily routine activities which contribute towards developing children's communication skills, such as story time where they can recall and predict endings of stories and circle time where they greet each other and talk about their experiences from home. Spontaneous conversations with staff allow children to think about what they are making, for example, as they build a house and talk about who lives there and compare this with their own family.

Children in the nursery are interested in numbers and use this in their play, by counting jigsaw pieces. Staff plan activities that help children to recognise their own age in numerical form and others which encourage children to sort and compare groups of numbers by colour. Displays of posters around the setting help children to develop an awareness of numbers.

Through freely available resources and staff-led activities children have opportunities to explore musical instruments, such as bells and tambourines and join in with singing songs during the nursery day. Staff plan activities which allow children to use their senses and talk about the items they are feeling, such as cooked spaghetti. A well resourced and interesting role play area provides opportunities for children to explore imaginary play. The role play area is changed frequently by staff, for example, by making this into a travel agents, where children can buy tickets, pack their suitcases, develop counting skills and explore different cultures. The staff team's awareness of successful activities contributes to children remaining interested in their play, for example, as children immensely enjoyed the travel agents role corner this was extended for an extra period of time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are supported very well due to staff collecting comprehensive information from parents. Introductory visits are highly valued by the staff team which helps to create a welcoming environment for children and parents. Staff spend considerable time getting to know children with their parents to help them to settle successfully in the setting. Collecting effective information about younger children's daily routines, which staff then adhere to, helps to create a secure and familiar environment for the younger children.

Children behave well in the setting. Staff encourage good behaviour successfully by praising children's efforts and achievements, for example, by clapping when they wash their hands and when they catch a large ball. Staff show a good understanding of the setting's behaviour policy and involve parents when necessary to ensure they are fully informed about their approach. Positive behaviour is openly encouraged as staff consistently encourage children to say please and thank you at lunch time. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children with differing needs are supported well. Specific staff establish close working relationships with children's key workers and external professionals to ensure children's needs are valued and developed in the setting. Children's development is assessed on a monthly basis to see what the next steps in their learning are, alongside professional advice, for example, from speech therapists, to help develop the children's skills in key areas.

Partnerships with parents are satisfactory. A variety of approaches are used within the nursery to ensure that parents are fully informed about the care their child receives, however, due to unclear assessment of the children's learning, information about children's educational progress is lacking. Little information is gathered from parents about what children can do when they

first start to attend, meaning that staff cannot successfully plan for the next steps in the children's learning. Comprehensive, consistent written records are shared with younger children's carers and verbal information is passed on daily to older children's parents and carers to ensure that they are well informed about their child's day. The manager makes effective use of her time to ensure that she can build up effective working relationships with the parents, for example, by making sure she is freely available at picking up and dropping off times.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and relaxed environment by a knowledgeable staff team. Staff use their time and the space well to ensure children are cared for in a well organised environment by supportive staff who understand their individual needs. Resources are used well to provide a varied range of worthwhile opportunities for children to explore with their senses, such as playing with cooked spaghetti.

Staff show a good awareness of their daily roles and responsibilities and have extra duties, such as responsibility for health and safety, training or behaviour, which they take great pride in and fulfil well. Comprehensive induction procedures work well for temporary and permanent staff, ensuring they know about the expectations of the setting, such as policies and procedures and ensuring that the children receive consistent care.

Leadership and management is good. The manager provides a good role model for staff around the setting and organises the staff team well to ensure that children receive good support. She helps staff to care for children effectively at busy routine times, such as sleep and meal times, however, she shows patience with the children's developing skills, for example, by letting some of the younger crawling babies make their own way down to the lunch tables at the bottom of the room.

The necessary paperwork and documentation is well organised and confidentially maintained.

Overall the setting 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 has been one complaint received by Ofsted. The complaint related to Standard 2: Organisation, Standard 4: Physical Environment, Standard 6: Safety, Standard 7: Health and Hygiene and Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents.

The complaints detailed above related to a number of issues, such as concerns over staff ratios, concerns there was no deputy or cook in place, concerns over the hygiene of the kitchen area and encouraging children's personal hygiene sufficiently, for example, adequate nappy changes and cleaning their faces, concerns over children playing unsupervised outside and that the nursery manager was unapproachable.

An unannounced visit was conducted by an inspector. The concerns that were raised were looked at and three actions were raised to ensure the provider meets the National Standards. The actions compiled of ensuring that sufficient staff were available during lunch time to

support children, making sure that an accurate record of children's attendance is maintained and ensuring that the kitchen conforms to environmental health and food safety regulations. The provider responded to these issues with an action plan detailing how they would ensure these actions were implemented. Information from the visit was passed on to the local environmental health department who conducted their own visit and found that everything was to their satisfaction except some minor cleaning issues which were discussed with the group. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was complete.

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 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 the grouping of children at meal times allows all children to benefit from good social interaction
- actively promote and develop older children's independence skills, for example, at meal times

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):

- ensure that plans and activities provide a balanced range throughout the areas of learning
- ensure assessment of children is rigorous and clear to show the next steps in their learning
- improve the staff team's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage
- provide parents with good information about their child's progress and use them effectively as partners in their child's learning, for example, by gaining information from them about what their child can do.

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