

'EUREKA' A place for discovery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507692
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Inspector	Sheila Dawn Flounders
Setting Address	Willenhall Training Centre, Robin Hood Road, Willenhall, Coventry, CV3 3AN
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Registered person	Willenhall Education, Employment & Training Centre
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?

'EUREKA' A place for discovery day care is run by the Willenhall Education, Employment and Training Centre. It opened in 1997 and the day care operates from self contained rooms, with nearby rooms used for the crèche and playscheme. It is situated in the Willenhall area, close to the city centre of Coventry. A maximum of 83 children may attend the setting at any one time. It is open from 08.00 to 17.30 weekdays, except bank holidays, for 50 weeks of the year and 8.30 to 13.00 on Saturdays, during term time. Children attend for a variety of sessions, including the Saturday crèche and a playscheme during the holidays. All children have access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 115 children from six weeks to eleven years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. Children come mainly from the local community. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a number who speak English as an additional language.

There are 16 staff who work with the children. All of these hold appropriate early years qualifications and many are working towards a higher level of qualification. The setting receives

support from the local authority. The centre supports the ethos of Reggio Emilia in discovering and using natural materials.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Hygiene has a high priority throughout most of the premises. Children are shown how to wash their hands thoroughly as soon as they are able to reach the sinks, with stools available to assist the younger children. Staff are skilled at ensuring the children also see them frequently washing theirs. The nursery layout ensures that children are always close to a sink, with tissues and paper towels also available outside. For the younger children there are robust nappy changing routines, with staff vigilant about the use of gloves, aprons and cleaning the changing areas. In many areas of the nursery children are well protected from cross-infection due to the general cleaning routines, the sickness policy which is reinforced when parents try to send children back too soon after illness and the awareness of staff. However, some of the younger children are put at risk by the inappropriate placing of babies bottles or bags containing lunch items on the floor. Suitable arrangements are in place when children are taken ill, with the nursery administering only prescribed medication with parental permission, which is well stored in a separate locked room.

Children are provided with healthy snacks by the nursery, with packed lunches and baby foods sent in from home for those who attend longer sessions, ensuring they are sufficiently nourished. Parents are given advice about suitable items to send in, some of which can be stored in the fridge until needed. Older children also take part in food tasting activities to broaden their experiences. Most of the staff have undertaken food hygiene training and ensure that the tables used for eating are well cleaned before use. Children have good access to a choice of drinks, independently once they move into toddlers, with a rolling snack bar in operation and cool water always available. Babies food and bottles are stored in their own fridge, with a procedure in place for reheating that ensures appropriate temperatures are reached. All children have their health and dietary requirements met because the nursery establishes what these are before a child attends and the staff working with the youngest children have a continuing dialogue with parents as new foods are introduced.

All age groups have good access to outdoor play, which is used daily by most of the children. Various sections of the garden are equipped for different ages so that all children are able to play safely. Part of the outside area is undercover so that children access activities, such as sand and water in all weathers. Inside provision is made for physical activities, such as action rhymes, soft play or use of a slide and the pre-school children have a planned activity session each day. This is often between activities which required them to sit and listen so provides opportunities to burn off some energy. During activities outside children in receipt of funded early education demonstrate that they are developing spatial awareness, can control their large movements, and travel around, under, over and through various balancing and climbing equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

All of the children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. Staff ensure that safety is a priority and are particularly vigilant about clearing up spillages that could become

slip hazards and that doors and gates are closed after they go through them. Each group have their own base room so that all children are in an environment which has the appropriate safety measures for their age. For example, the babies have gates at their entrance, while older children have more independence to leave the room to access the snack table or use the bathroom with the main locked and coded entrance door keeping them all from other parts of the building. Completely separate areas of the building are used for the crèche and the playscheme when in operation. Children use only suitable and safe equipment, with staff checking daily that things remain so. The outdoor area is always checked before use and detailed risk assessments of the premises and some of the activities are carried out by the staff involved in each room to identify and minimise potential hazards.

Children are kept safe on outings with a comprehensive procedure in place, including the use of appropriate restraints if transport is used. Older children have discussions about road safety before going out as well as being reminded what to do if they get separated from the group. Regular practises of the emergency evacuation drill ensure that children learn to protect themselves, with any issues that arise quickly rectified. Measures are also in place to protect children from the sun in warmer months. All of the staff are aware of what procedures to put in place to safeguard the children if necessary, these procedures are shared with parents when their child enrolls.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem as staff working with all the age groups provide them with a wide variety of planned activities which contain a mix of familiar experiences, alongside staff and other children they know. The environment is child-centred with accessible resources to encourage independence. For example, the youngest babies are surrounded with baskets and boxes on the floor containing various materials to explore with their hands and feet; older babies look at themselves in the mirror or listen and respond to music; and toddlers enjoy outdoor activities as a group or examining the various objects in the sensory room. All of the children are interested in what they do because staff ensure that there are always diverse activities in each session, with the children free to move around between them for most of the time, to choose what they want to do. Spontaneous activities are also incorporated into the session when staff follow the children's lead when something unplanned captures their interest. The older children who attend for the playscheme are encouraged to think about the activities they want to pursue.

Children ask questions often as staff provide an environment that is rich in language opportunities, for example, they talk about the books they share, talk to staff as they play alongside them and to each other during imaginary play. Children use their initiative to examine the resources staff provide and discover what they do, to explore their rooms and the outdoor area. They acquire new knowledge and skills continually, for example, the recent introduction of baby signing for the younger children and Makaton for the older ones provides greater opportunities for communication. Children respond well to such challenge, which is tailored to individual needs as the staff know them well and plan appropriately, with a strong emphasis on heuristic play. All the children quickly make positive relationships, especially with their keyworker, the bond being very evident between staff and the younger children as they balance caring for their basic needs, with providing activities to stimulate particularly their communication, creative and physical skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are very well qualified, work together as a team and are skilled at covering many aspects of children's learning in each activity. The quality of their interaction with the children shows they understand the Foundation Stage curriculum and also how children learn. Planning is detailed, although often in different places and covers all necessary elements, including some evaluation. Staff ensure that challenge is present in many activities, getting the children to think of solutions to problems for themselves, and giving them time to do so is a strong feature of their teaching. They have realistic expectations of what the children can achieve in most areas, although at times their use of numbers in routine counting exceeds those which the children understand.

Open-ended questioning helps children to think and staff to know which children will be able to respond to this method. They are aware of the language barrier for several of the children and use alternative visual clues for them. Staff make generally good use of their time and resources, although children occasionally begin to get restless before the end of a group activities, and some time is wasted when getting ready to go outside. Assessment is an ongoing process, with timetabled slots also set aside for detailed observations, with the information collated by the keyworkers. However, limited information about children's starting abilities inhibits a clear picture of their progress particularly early in the year.

Children are making good progress, as they are provided with learning opportunities and well chosen activities that cover all areas of the curriculum, with a particular emphasis on language development, problem solving and creativity. For example, before they can play with dough they are involved in making it. They discuss and examine the ingredients using all their senses and see who can remember how they made it before. They measure and count as items are added to the mix, taking turns to do so, and they think about how it will change. During the activity new vocabulary is introduced, such as 'vanilla', and children learn to use familiar words, such as 'more' or 'less' in connection with mathematics as they consider how many spoons of ingredients they need at different points during the mixing. Personal hygiene is also well supported during activities as children wash their hands after handling the dough, after cleaning out the snails or other frequent messy play activities.

Group activities provide children with a wealth of learning opportunities. During registration and circle time, children find themselves a space, respond to the music by listening and sitting quietly, confidently answer to their names in front of the others and think about why some children are late. They count how many children and adults are present and think about what day of the week and season it is. A discussion about the weather prompts some children to go to the door and have a look at what is happening outside, such as why the leaves are changing colour, while the rest consider what they might say on their return. Consideration of the seasons leads the children to the thought of snowmen, which is then brought round to thoughts of shape by staff and children go off to other parts of the room to see what different shapes they can find. A later planned activity provides opportunities for the children to consider what materials a range of objects are made of and they practise a new song they have been learning which reinforces this knowledge.

During outdoor play the children explore the properties of water as they pour using various containers, or catch fish with the magnetic rods. They demonstrate self-care as they manage their shoes to play in the sand, dress-up as pirates or fetch aprons to protect their clothes. They search in the sand for treasure and count the pieces they find. They talk about what the sand feels like, what different parts of the fish are called or whether the water levels are the same in various bottles. A comment by children about swimming like a fish leads to a detailed discussion about holidays, how they get there and where else they might go swimming, facilitated

through encouragement by the member of staff. Thus children make sense of the world around them because they are provided with an interesting environment to explore, with lots of first-hand experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have their individual needs met well, including those with additional language needs, mainly because of the use of a key worker system so that children are cared for by consistent adults, particularly the youngest children. For example, daily discussion takes place as babies arrive about sleep and feeding, such as moving them onto use a cup or if they woke early, so that staff are able to follow parental wishes. Some staff also have considerable past experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, during which time they built up liaisons with external agencies and attended additional training which would be used again to support any children requiring individual support. Most children have a sense of belonging in the nursery, which forms quickly for new starters as they are encouraged to visit several times before they start. The older children are shown how to take care of their own belongings and get involved in the routines, for example, putting their own leftover food into the bin. All of the children take pride in seeing their own photographs and creative work displayed prominently throughout the premises and the developing relationship between the staff and their family.

Behaviour is very good throughout the nursery because staff have realistic expectations of the children, handle the minor incidents that occur consistently and provide children with a positive role model so that they begin to distinguish between right and wrong. They get on very well together and through interaction with staff develop good self-esteem as they are valued and listened to. They have real opportunities to make choices and decisions about what they do and therefore engage fully in activities, resulting in less reminders being necessary about the simple boundaries that are in place. All of the children are aware of their own needs and interests and are provided with the means to make these known to staff, including non-verbal communication. They also see staff react positively to others different needs and choices, which they learn to respect. Children become aware of wider society by accessing experiences and resources that are meaningful to their understanding and age, for example, through tactile exploration for babies, by visual stimuli, by handling dolls, jigsaws and books, or by tasting foods from countries where some of the children's families originate. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered in the pre-school, as they are encouraged to listen to music, share their family culture, work with varying groups of adults and children and respect the simple behaviour rules that are in place.

All parents receive detailed information about the nursery, including a good explanation of the role of key worker and staff ensure that they obtain all the details and permissions necessary to care for each child. Managers and senior staff take particular care to ensure information is exchanged with parents for whom English is an additional language. Information is sent home about what the children have been doing, although this lacks detail for older children of what they learn or their progress. The partnership with parents and carers whose children are in receipt of early education is good, with additional information provided about the foundation stage curriculum. They have formal termly opportunities to discuss their child's achievements and progress with staff as well as the daily exchange when children are collected. Visual images are used to assist communication with some parents, although at times these are not prominent. Some opportunities are provided for parents to share what they know about the child, but these concentrate on care issues which results in incomplete evidence being available about

children's starting abilities or what they learn at home. Parents are made aware that they can spend time in the pre-school room, they also send in items to support children's learning or help with activities, such as planting in the garden or decorating the room at Christmas.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff make generally good use of the space within the premises, their time and the resources available, of which there are plenty, although the sensory room is not always used for purposeful activities. Sound staff deployment, and the use of supernumerary staff to cover breaks if necessary, ensures that ratios are maintained at all times. Thorough vetting procedures ensure that children are only cared for by suitable people and a positive attitude towards induction and ongoing training has produced a well-qualified staff group, with individual room teams working very well together. All staff are encouraged to take responsibility for their work, included in planning and made aware of changes to policies or procedures, which all promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievements and their positive contribution within the nursery. For example, having a member of staff responsible for behaviour management in each room ensures that incidents can be dealt with consistently, with newer staff supported in understanding what the policy means in practice. All necessary documentation is maintained, although at times some information is duplicated unnecessarily. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of early education is good. The manager and deputy continue to be involved in the pre-school room which allows them to keep an overview of the provision. They encourage staff to plan from what the children can do, and through the appraisal system and regular meetings identify the strengths and weaknesses of the educational provision. Their strong ongoing commitment to improve is clearly demonstrated through facilitating staff's attendance at relevant training, encouragement to allocate time for planning, evaluation, observation and assessment, and the provision of resources. They also promote the use of recent research to underpin practice.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the provider has been asked to improve procedures for managing access to the premises and the cleaning of equipment. There is now a robust system of monitoring all visitors to the building, with records maintained of times of entry and exit, and some equipment has been moved away from the toilet area with additional cleaning rotas implemented to ensure that all toys, equipment and furniture are clean. These measures have improved children's safety and health.

The provider was also asked to provide more opportunities for information technology, to link sounds and letters, for children to climb and for parents or carers of the funded children to be involved in their learning. There is now a wider range of equipment indoors and outside, including a climbing frame, crates, tyres and a ladder to develop large muscles and more resources, such as a metal detector, camera and remote control toys, as well as a computer in the pre-school room to provide increased access to technology. Staff have attended training on sounds and letters and now provide an environment rich in print, use frequent rhymes and songs for children to explore sound, daily opportunities for name recognition and role play, such as 'the office'. Home link diaries have been developed to inform parents and carers of children's activities and the opportunity to add their own comments, although they are not

filled in or sent home at the same interval for all children. These measures provide children with more learning opportunities and parents with more information.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there has been a complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. In November 2006 a concern was raised with Ofsted that trainees were not supervised at all times; that minimum staff to child ratios were not maintained; that equipment was not in a suitable state of repair and that good hygiene procedures were not followed. An unannounced visit took place to investigate and National Standards 2 Organisation, 5 Equipment, 6 Safety and 7 Health. There was no evidence to suggest any breach of standards 2 or 5; however, there was evidence to suggest a breach of standard 6 and a breach of standard 7 and two actions were agreed as a result. 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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 all food and drink is served in accordance with hygiene procedures to prevent the spread of infection.

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 daily routines are used appropriately to further children's learning
- continue to develop information collected from parents, particularly in relation to children's abilities.

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