

St Matthews Neighbourhood Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289609
Inspection date	14 January 2008
Inspector	Hazel Christine White
Setting Address	St. Matthews Centre, 10 Malabar Road, Leicester, LE1 2PD
Telephone number	0116 2221068or 6
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Registered person	N C H
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 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?

First Steps, St Matthews is a Sure Start Neighbourhood Nursery. It opened in 2004 and operates from rooms within an inner city neighbourhood centre. It is situated in a large housing estate in the City of Leicester. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 9.00 to 17.00, term time only. Children currently attend for pre-school sessions from 9.00 until 11.45 and 13.00m until 15.30. There is no access to outdoor play.

There are currently 56 children aged under 5 years on roll. All of these children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves families and children from the local community and surrounding areas. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are supported.

The Nursery employs eight staff. Of these, five including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority early years childcare partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show a satisfactory understanding of keeping themselves healthy. More able children confidently take care of their own personal needs with regard to hand washing and accessing the bathroom. Children's risk of infection passed on by others is minimised because of a health and safety policy that is shared with parents, informing them of illnesses that will mean their child should not attend. All areas and toys and equipment are in a clean condition. This ensures children are protected from cross-infection and helps them to remain healthy. Staff follow clear and correct procedures when dealing with accidents and medication and all have current first aid certificates.

Children are satisfactorily nourished and hydrated. They are offered healthy snacks from a newly introduced self-service snack bar and access water from a dispenser. Staff support and encourage discussions with children about the importance of healthy eating. Children's health and dietary needs are well met as parents provide information about their child's needs, preferences and specific requirements. Staff follow clear hygiene procedures whilst preparing snacks and drinks for children. All staff have received food hygiene training.

There is no outside play area, however, physical development is adequately promoted as children have sufficient opportunities to be active indoors. They are encouraged to have a positive attitude to exercise and regularly access a sports hall within the building. Children enjoy games using a parachute, bats and balls, hoops, bean bags and balancing beams. They dance and move to music, as a result, children are able to develop a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Space is appropriately organised to enable children to experience a variety of play opportunities. Partitions are used to divide the room into specific areas, for example, role play, creative, and mathematical. Children move confidently and independently throughout the areas as potential risks have been identified and minimised by staff. Children are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe, as they are gently reminded about safety rules within the setting. Children are not developing a sufficient awareness of fire safety because emergency escape routines are not regularly practised. As a result, children are not familiar with them which may compromise their safety.

Toys, equipment and furniture are checked and cleaned regularly. Resources are generally well organised and allow children to make some independent choices. Toys are mainly stored in low cupboards and children can ask for those that they cannot see. Children were observed safely, self-selecting toys and helping to tidy up to prevent tripping hazards. These practices contribute to children playing in safe and suitable surroundings.

Children are appropriately protected by staff, who have a sound understanding of child protection policies and procedures. They demonstrate a good understanding of their role and responsibility with regard to protecting children in their care and share their policies with parents. Staff are fully conversant with local referral procedures and give high priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and gaining confidence. They are eager to learn and participate enthusiastically in a wide range of stimulating and fun activities. Children enjoy very positive relationships with staff and are developing friendships with their peers. Their self-esteem is fostered well through effective levels of support encouragement and nurturing. Children are actively praised for their achievements and encouraged to take pride in their own work. They are able to move freely between activities and have good opportunities to relax and be quiet. Children make themselves comfortable on soft chairs or floor cushions and happily look through books with adults. Staff create a calm learning environment in which children thrive.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how to promote children's learning through play. Staff are caring, patient and supportive of the children in their care, they have a high regard for them as individuals and know them well. Staff plan an interesting and exciting range of practical activities, which help children develop a positive attitude towards learning. The manager and early years teacher take responsibility for planning the educational programme in consultation with the staff team. Planning covers the six areas of learning and is related to the stepping stones, which help children to make progress. However, children are not fully extending their interest in mathematics. Staff do not sufficiently use daily routines and spontaneous play to maximise their learning in this area. Staff provide positive role models and have high expectations for good behaviour. Any challenging behaviour is managed sensitively and consistently.

The re-organised accommodation provides a stimulating learning environment. Children's work is valued and attractively displayed around the pre-school room. All children are encouraged to participate in activities and benefit from the staff's constructive questions, which encourage children to express their feelings and develop their ideas and interests. Assessment is based upon meaningful observations recorded in children's profiles and staff informally consider children's next step in learning. However, they have not yet devised an effective system of evaluating these records to formally identify children's next step in learning to use as an aid to future planning. Staff work directly with children for much of the time and make effective use of what is available to them.

Most children speak English as an additional language. They are learning to engage in conversations with other children and adults. They are confident in making their needs known, some by using visual aids such as cards with pictures and symbols of activities or routines. Children respond promptly to signals given by staff to indicate a change of routine and are actively encouraged help tidy away after each activity. They practise their early writing through easy access to the writing area and role play situations. Children look forward to circle, story and singing time. They are learning a repertoire of rhymes and enthusiastically join in with the 'welcome song'. Children are beginning to learn how print carries meaning, some children are able to recognise their own name at self-registration and are beginning to label their own artwork.

Children are developing satisfactory mathematical skills and sequence, sort and match through various activities. They talk about and name shapes such as, square, triangle and circle as they are rolling and cutting dough. They use a good range of small equipment, including scissors, paint brushes, glue sticks and pencils which they are beginning to handle with increasing control.

Children have opportunities to use their imagination in role-play situations. They dress up and become doctors, vets, travel agents and hairdressers. They show great delight as staff help them play a game using feathers. They watched them float to the floor and described how they tickle their hand as they pick them up. Children explore sound through playing musical instruments and listen to a variety of music.

Children examine insects under the microscope and begin to identify features in their natural environment such as the birds, flowers and trees when they go for local walks. Children have fun playing in the snow and show fascination as they experiment with ice and watch it melt into water.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop good social skills in this caring environment as staff are fully aware of their needs and effective routines ensure they are continually met. They are settling well and the daily routine ensures children have freedom of choice. Children are learning to respect diversity within their immediate and wider community through planned and spontaneous activities, toys and resources such as dressing up clothes, dolls and books. They take part in celebrations of different festivals from around the world, such as Eid and have tasted food from other cultures.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported. Staff have good experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a clear understanding of the need to adapt activities to ensure inclusion. Children's needs are met by working closely with parents and other professionals. All children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all activities and facilities available to them. There are clearly identified procedures in place to address the specific needs of all children.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They receive praise and encouragement and learn what is right and wrong. As a result children's behaviour is good. They learn to share, take turns and show consideration for others. They respond positively to the high expectations set by staff who use appropriate strategies to manage children's behaviour in a way that promotes their understanding and learning. Rules are clearly displayed and children are reminded of good listening, good waiting, good friends and taking turns.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Information is displayed about the education programme. Communication with parents is effective through daily contact, notice board, displays, regular newsletters and parent review meetings. Staff encourage parents to be involved in children's initial and ongoing assessments. Parents are asked to share what they know about their child's interest, achievements and learning during home visits and settling in visits with their key workers. Parent's meetings are held periodically and they are able to discuss any issues regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents comment positively about the active involvement in their child's learning, about the service and care offered and of the relationships with staff and their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a friendly and caring environment. Staff work effectively as a team and have access to further training opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills. They know the children very well and are attentive to their individual requirements. The overall

organisation of the pre-school ensures that children's needs are effectively met and that they are able to safely and independently access all available areas.

All legally required policies and procedures are in place. These are often comprehensive and are known to staff so that they contribute to children's health, safety and well-being. Documentation is well-organised, regularly reviewed and shared with parents. Children's personal information is stored securely, which helps to maintain confidentiality. Attendance records are generally well maintained, however, they are not always accurate as staff do not complete them daily. Consequently children's safety may be compromised in an emergency.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The manager and early years teacher take the lead role in planning the educational programme by working closely with staff to implement a good variety of stimulating activities to support children's ongoing learning. Staff monitor and observe children's progress and this information is used to complete their assessment profiles. The manager has a clear vision of the strengths and areas for improvement of the setting and is committed to improving the care and education of the children.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to continue to develop and review the operational plan and the effective deployment of staff; further develop planning to include a range of creative and outdoor activities and play opportunities for children on a regular basis. The operational plan has been reviewed and updated to ensure that policies and procedures reflects current practice. Children are allocated a key worker and staff are deployed effectively to ensure that their individual needs are met and welfare promoted. Planning includes a balance of creative and physical opportunities for children. They experience playing with musical instruments, use their imagination in the role play area and have a good variety of materials to make pictures and models. The setting does not have an outside area, however, children are taken for walks to explore the local environment. They regularly access the sports hall where they are able to exercise, ride on wheeled toys, play team games and use resources such as balls, quoits, hoops and bean bags. Therefore positive steps have been taken to promote children's all round development.

Nursery Education

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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.

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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 fire drills are carried out periodically
- ensure that staff attendance is recorded on a daily basis, showing hours of attendance.

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):

- increase the opportunities for children to use mathematics in daily activities and everyday routines
- use information gained from assessments to plan the children's next steps of learning.

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