

Castlefields Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY295067
Inspection date	07 November 2007
Inspector	Helene Anne Terry
Setting Address	Nursery, The Bungalow, Field Top Road, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, HD6 3XB
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Registered person	The Governing Body of Castlefields Infant School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 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?

Castlefields Pre-school and out of school care is run by the governing body of Castlefields Infant school in Halifax, West Yorkshire. It was registered in 2004 and consists of three groups. These groups operate from a playroom within the main school building and a separate facility within the school grounds. Tiny Tigers caters for children two to four years, Little Leopards for children three to four years and the Funhouse is the out of school facility. A maximum of 48 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school is open 09.00 until 11.30 and 12.30 until 15.00, term time only. There are facilities for children to stay and have lunch over the lunch time period. The out of school facilities are open 08.00 until 09.00 and 15.00 until 18.00 term time and 08.00 until 18.00 during some school holidays. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 110 children aged two to 11 years on roll. Of these, 45 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting caters for children from the local community and surrounding areas, which is mixed culturally and economically. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs a range of staff who work across all three of the groups. Most staff hold early years qualification to level 2 or 3, with two members of staff working towards an early years foundation degree. The preschool receives support from the local authority and the reception class teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment. They follow good hygiene practices, such as washing their hands before meals, after visiting the toilet and messy play. Older children are independent with regards to their own personal care. Photographs and posters of hygiene routines are displayed for children to follow. Children and their parents also learn about good oral hygiene by visits from an oral hygienist. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures are taken when children are ill so that health needs are met. Staff hold current first aid certificates; parents give written consent to enable staff to seek emergency medical treatment or advice and first aid boxes are well stocked and readily available.

Children are well nourished and they are provided with regular drinks and food that is nutritious and complies with their dietary and religious needs. Staff enable children to learn about healthy living through a range of activities that develop the children's understanding of what foods are good for them. Little Leopards operates a 'café style' system whereby children choose when they want to eat their snack. Tiny Tigers and the Funhouse have set snack times used as a social occasion where children sit together and discuss their day. Snacks are healthy and include fruit, crackers, breadsticks and toast. The older children enjoy making smoothies as part of their activities. Children who stay over the lunch time period have the option of a packed lunch, provided by their parents or a school lunch. Parents are reminded to consider healthy options and to place a cooler pack in the lunch boxes to keep food fresh. Drinking water is always available and children independently help themselves throughout the sessions. Additional drinks of milk are offered during snack times. Staff exchange relevant information with parents and ensure that any special requirements are recorded and respected.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which promotes their physical development and well-being. They have daily access to the outside and a good range of outdoor equipment. Children confidently climb, slide and swing on the large apparatus, some of which is challenging for the more able children. The younger children enjoy balancing on the beams with the support of staff. This increases their skills and coordination. They use wheeled toys and enjoy running through the willow paths chasing one another; moving freely in a variety of ways.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained child-centred setting where they are kept safe. The building meets the needs of the children very well. They are able to move around independently, have access to all types of play and have their welfare needs well met. This helps them to feel confident and happy during their time at nursery. Attractive displays of the children's work, together with posters and photographs, contribute to the welcoming environment and encourage children to develop a sense of belonging. Staff are vigilant and follow procedures which minimise

risks and keep children safe. Risk assessments are in place and are reviewed regularly. Children learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they take part in regular fire drills, learn about road safety on outings and through visits by the 'lollipop' man. They also learn how to use equipment safely. The community police officer also visits the setting to talk to the out of school children about how to keep themselves safe when out and about. There are good procedures in place for the safe collection of children from school, staff are aware of who they are collecting each day from the classrooms within the main school building and from one other school in the area.

Children access a good range of equipment and choose from a good range of developmentally appropriate resources that foster most areas of their development. In all the play areas, resources are well organised into specific areas of learning within the playrooms at child height, encouraging children to make choices and promote their independence skills.

Children's welfare is protected because staff demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. The setting has a clear child protection policy that is linked to the school and is in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Some staff have attended relevant training to extend their understanding of related issues. Children are only released into the care of known individuals and they are never left unsupervised with persons who have not been suitably vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in a welcoming environment. They enjoy a wide range of activities and experiences, both indoors and outside, that contribute to their learning and all-round development. Staff make effective use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support young children's development. Planning and children's assessments are used clearly to extend their individual learning. Activities and resources in the playroom are age specific for children attending and these are all easily accessible ensuring children have free choice, which promotes independence. Children move between activities freely, spending as much or as little time as they wish, depending on their interests. Many of the children attend the setting for the full day and spend time within Tiny Tigers and Little Leopards groups. Staff share their observations of the children to ensure continuity of care across all the groups.

The daily routines are varied and flexible with time for children to have snacks and meals and take part in activities both indoors and outdoors. The children delight in taking part in role play as they dress up as witches and pretend to fly around the room using the road crossing stop sign as a broomstick. Young children enjoy imitating first hand experiences as they take care of the dolls; feeding them and taking them for walks. Children express themselves creatively as they make fireworks from recycled materials, paint at the easel and play with the dough. Children delight in reading their favourite stories together. They listen carefully to 'Going on a bear hunt' and enthusiastically take part in the actions and sounds. Staff are sensitive to individual children's needs, for example, young children not wanting to join in with story time sit with a member of staff and share a book together.

Children relate well to each other and have developed good relationships with staff. They are at ease to go to them for comfort, reassurance and support. Children interact with adults and they are beginning to learn to play with and alongside others. Staff model good language and give children the opportunities and time to use their language skills. They talk to children and listen to their responses. This positively impacts on children's sense of well-being.

School age children enjoy a good range of indoor and outdoor activities which help them to play, rest and learn in a stimulating environment. Children are given the opportunity to make choices about the activities, including places they like to visit during the school holidays. There are appointed Funhouse councillors, who represent the children and are available for children to approach if they need help. Children enjoy playing on the computers and relaxing on the cushions as they watch a video after a busy day at school. They also enjoy taking part in lots of creative activities as they use the chinks to draw trees then go outside to collect leaves to stick on them. They play with the dough and giggle at the changes they make to it as it becomes warm and sticky. Children say that they like coming to the Funhouse where they enjoy playing games, drawing and singing and dancing.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and implement this well by providing a range of interesting activities which cover the six areas of learning. Written plans identify the learning outcomes of the activities and these are differentiated for the individual needs of the children by their key workers. However, planning is not evaluated to document its success or identify areas that can improved on. Staff deploy themselves effectively and ensure that children are purposefully engaged, whilst still encouraging children's freedom of choice. Staff listen to children closely and are interested in what they do and say, they ask questions about what the children are doing and why, to develop and extend children's learning. For example, children are encouraged to use language skills as they recall how to play a game of dominoes. They are also given opportunities to consider number problems. For example, children building a tower of bricks are asked how many more bricks they need to make a tower of 10. Staff provide opportunities for children to become independent learners and plan activities to observe children in their play and extend their development. They provide stimulating resources to support and enhance children's learning. Observations are used adequately to complete profiles for each child to assess what they can do and identify areas for development. However, these observations are not linked to the stepping stones along which children are progressing.

Overall, the children are making good progress in all areas of learning. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children relate well and make attachments to members of their group. They have friends that they like to play with and show care and concern for others. For example, the more able children enjoy the responsibility of helping the younger children in the group. Children are aware of the boundaries and behaviour expectations within the setting. For example, children playing in the sand say to another child 'You can't play in the sand cos you haven't got an apron on'. Another child then gives the child an apron and says 'There you are'. Children operate very independently within the play areas promoting their confidence and self-esteem. They attend to their personal hygiene, find their name cards as they arrive and to signify that they have eaten snack. They take pride in the little tasks that they are allocated, such as special areas they tidy up and they help prepare snack by peeling oranges, buttering their own toast and pouring their own drinks.

Children use language well. They talk with their peers and staff about their home life and use talk to connect ideas as they discuss how to play the game of dominoes. Children enjoy books; they handle them appropriately as they turn the pages from right to left and pretend to read the story to their peers. More able children are beginning to differentiate between the sounds of letters of the alphabet, whilst the younger children enjoy the sounds of rhyming songs. They hold pencils well and draw lines, circles and dots, with more able children forming recognisable letters of the alphabet associated with their name.

Children have regular opportunities to use their counting skills during many activities. For example, they count the number of bricks in the tower they have built and objects on the jigsaw puzzle. More able children can count four objects from a larger group as they share out the dominoes and they are beginning to recognise some shapes, such as triangle and square. However, children have limited opportunity to use their calculation skills during everyday activities.

Children are beginning to develop an understanding about the world in which they live. They show an interest in the lives of other people familiar to them and in their environment as they go for walks in the community, looking at the changes to the seasons. Children know how to operate simple equipment as they play with programmable toys, computers and the whiteboard. However, they have limited opportunity to discover how and why things work and happen through the use of readily available magnets, magnifying glasses and kaleidoscopes.

Children enjoy lots of creative activities to enable them to express their feelings and ideas. They freely access paint, dough, water and sand and create collages and fireworks from recycled materials. They engage in imaginative play based on first hand experiences as they take care of dolls, play with the trains and playhouse. Children enjoy music as they sing songs enthusiastically at circle time and tap on the musical instruments; tapping out sounds loudly and softly to the songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about the wider world. They celebrate a range of cultural festivals, such as the Chinese New Year and Diwali, as well as Christian festivals throughout the year. This enables children to respect and value the traditions and beliefs of others. Children play with some resources and take part in activities which promote positive images of different ethnic groups and culture, although these are not spread evenly across all the groups within the setting. There are limited resources that represent positive images of disability in society; this hinders opportunities for children to extend their knowledge of people's differences and similarities. There are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Discussions reveal that experienced staff ensure that all children have access to the full range of activities available. They work closely with parents and other agencies to ensure children make good progress which takes into account their individual needs and abilities. This promotes an inclusive service for all children.

Children learn about responsible behaviour and behave very well. They know the routine and respond positively to consistent 'rules' and positive praise and encouragement. Children are happy when they receive reward stamps for being helpful or doing some good work. This boosts their self-esteem and confidence. Children learn to share, take turns and be cooperative. Staff encourage children to negotiate as they play games. Older children agree to have their names written on a board so that they know whose turn it is on the computer next. Staff demonstrate positive behaviour towards the children to create a calm atmosphere and respect for each other. Children are encouraged to use manners, such as please and thank you, and some children do not need reminding. Displayed posters encourage children to think about their own thoughts and feelings, such as what makes them 'sad' and there is information on bullying. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the strong and trusting relationships between the staff and their parents. Children and parents are greeted on arrival and welcomed into the setting. Staff work closely

with parents to ensure that the individual needs of each child are met. Good procedures are in place to help children settle and feel secure which include home visits before children attend the pre-school. There are very effective systems in place to ensure information is shared on a regular basis about children's progress and daily activities, for example, through daily chats with staff, access to the child's key person and development records. Policies and procedures are available to parents about the setting and a newsletter is used to update on any changes and forthcoming events. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the setting and some parents benefit from training that is offered to enhance their skills. For example, some parents attended a course on oral health and hygiene.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents are well informed of their child's progress and have regular opportunities to discuss the educational programme with staff. They receive good quality information about policies and procedures and the six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. Parents are invited to a consultation with their child's key worker twice a year where they discuss their child's progress. Parents are given suggestions on how to extend their child's learning at home within the newsletter and use the library service with their child each week. This effectively promotes the two-way process of supporting children development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Space, resources and deployment of staff are used effectively to meet the needs of the children and enhance their well-being. Adult to child ratios are consistently maintained and children benefit from the experience of qualified staff, most of whom hold a level 3 qualification in care and education. Staff working in the setting are vetted and there are clear recruitment procedures in place to protect children. The very good range of policies and procedures effectively underpin the setting.

Leadership and management within the setting are good. Management is motivated and enthusiastic and staff take full advantage of the training opportunities available to them. Staff are further supported through a good induction process and appraisal system. Management reflect effectively on their practice within the setting, which enables them to identify the settings strengths and weaknesses and implement beneficial plans to make changes. The groups are included in the schools improvement plan. The monitoring and evaluation of the nursery education is not totally effective because planning is not evaluated for its success in meeting the needs of the children and staff do not match their observations of children to the stepping stones. Staff work very well as a team and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Everyone is committed to the continued improvement of the care and education of the children. Overall, the provision 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 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- provide a range of resources that represent positive images of disability in society.

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 planning of the curriculum is evaluated and that written observations of the children are linked to the stepping stones
- provide opportunities for the children to use simple calculation skills during everyday activities and that they have regular access to equipment to enable them to explore how and why things work and happen.

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