

# Accrington Road Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | EY285644  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 26 February 2008                                |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Linda Cook                                      |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Accrington Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 2AF |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council           |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated                                      |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](http://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?

Accrington Road Children's Centre is one of two centres provided by Blackburn and Darwen Borough Council which opened in 2004. A head of centre manages the two sites and co-ordinates all additional services in partnership with local providers which consist of health, jobcentre plus, children's services and other organisations both voluntary and private. These all link to a local management board, who are the children's trust representatives, parents and staff.

The nursery is self contained and operates from three rooms on the ground floor. An additional room is available on the first floor for an occasional crèche if required. The property is a new, purpose built children's unit annexed to an existing community centre and is situated on one of the main routes into Blackburn town centre, approximately one mile away. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery and up to 20 children in the crèche at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 49 weeks of the year and the crèche opens on demand to support parent's training and meetings. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 66 children aged from birth to under 5 years on roll. Of these 45 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as a number of parents travel to work. The nursery currently supports a number of children with additional educational needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 13 staff all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications or are working towards. Two support workers are also employed.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean and tidy premises, and are well protected from infection through thorough hygiene procedures, which are followed by all practitioners. These procedures include wiping the equipment, surfaces and changing mats using antibacterial spray, and sweeping the room when the children have eaten. Children learn the importance of personal hygiene as they wash their hands before eating, following messy play and when they have used the toilet. They can access the sinks, taps and soap easily and this fosters their independence. Posters and pictures displayed in the cloakrooms show children how to wash their hands thoroughly.

Children have the benefit of very healthy snacks and meals. The centre ensures that they offer a good variety of fruit and vegetables throughout the day. Children's health and dietary needs are successfully met as practitioners conscientiously record children's dietary needs and ensure any specific requirements are met. Children are able to help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the session. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure food is prepared safely, as the cook and all staff have attended food hygiene training.

Children enjoy physical play both indoors and outdoors and the daily routine ensures the children enjoy the fresh air outdoors most days. Children move around the setting confidently and with control; they negotiate steps very confidently from a young age, move to music and complete action rhymes. They develop a good awareness of space and begin to learn about the effect of exercise on their bodies. They competently use a wide range of small and large equipment, for example, cutlery, pencils, glue sticks, scissors, wheeled toys and balancing blocks. However, the opportunities for children to develop their climbing skills are more limited as they do not have access to larger play equipment every day.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are protected from harm as they are cared for in well maintained premises. There is plenty of space, indoors and out of doors, for the children to move freely and without fear of injury. The facilities are suitable and adapted for the children attending. Children use toys and equipment that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. These are clean, well maintained and of very good quality.

Safety is maintained as the centre complete thorough written risk assessments and perform a visual check of areas used by children at the beginning and end of each day following a check list. Children are secure as the door remains locked with a bell entry system and a manned reception desk. Practitioners are vigilant in their supervision of the children at all times and children's safety is given high priority.

Children are protected as practitioners fully understand their responsibilities to ensure the welfare of each child. They are well aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and have clear procedures to follow should they have concerns which follows the Local Safeguarding Children Board's guidance. They attend child protection training and this is regularly updated.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in nursery and arrive happy and eager to participate. Younger children are making good progress because the staff have developed an effective understanding of the needs of children under five. Regular assessments including spontaneous observations are used by key workers to identify children's future learning. Clear planning is in place which is linked to the 'Birth to three framework' and the Foundation Stage. Information from the children's assessments is used to inform future planning for all children although the individual children's future learning is not formally identified in the planning system.

Children in all age groups are confident and display good self-esteem, which is largely due to the actions of the practitioners who evidently know the children well. They are consistently good role models for children, listen to what children are saying and clearly value their contributions. Children approach the adults freely and are constantly reassured with praise and encouragement. As a result, all children develop warm trusting relationships with practitioners and are relaxed and settled. Independence is generally well promoted throughout the nursery; children use their initiative and select their own resources and activities. Children acquire new skills as they join in a wide range of interesting activities. Children under two experiment with colours as they make marks with crayons on paper. They have access to a range of natural materials such as sand and the contents of treasure baskets.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff's clear knowledge of the early learning goals and how children learn enables the children to access the whole curriculum at their chosen play. They have an excellent understanding of how their interaction and support enables children to build on what they know and can do.

The adults engage fully with the children throughout the session, instinctively using conversational questioning techniques effectively to support and extend the children's learning. The current detailed plans of activities show clearly that the whole curriculum is covered over the children's time at the setting; they also show intended learning. Staff make observations of the children's achievements and keep detailed assessment records for each child which clearly show their progress in individual learning journals. However, the links between assessment and planning need to be strengthened, so planning clearly shows how individual children are to be supported and moved on in their learning.

The staff use the available space very well to provide defined areas of learning and to accommodate early learning and self help skills. They use a variety of resources to provide attractive displays and a welcoming and stimulating learning environment for the children. The daily routines are effective in developing the children's independence and meet their needs well.

Children enthusiastically enjoy all that they do and are actively engaged. There is a wealth of opportunities for independent learning throughout the sessions. For example, children can

choose from a range of high quality equipment like construction toys, role play and imaginative toys, computers, books, sand and water play, art and craft equipment and musical instruments. During activities children demonstrate good concentration skills, for example, they persevere for considerable periods of time to create their desired effect as they make cards for Mother's Day.

Children are beginning to recognise their own name as part of the arrangements for registration and talk about the initial letters of their name. They begin to form recognisable letters as they are encouraged to label their work. Children communicate well and are eager to share their experiences with practitioners. The role play areas are an important part of the room where children can develop their literacy skills as they use clip boards and write lists. They develop their imagination to a good level as they dress up as vets and look after the sick animals or make dinner in the home corner. Books are shared with practitioners, for example, children listen to stories in large groups at story time, in small groups in the book corner or individually. They handle books well, turn pages correctly and following print from left to right across the page. They talk about what they see in the pictures and predict what might happen next. Children with English as a second language are able to enjoy books in their first language and are supported by practitioners.

Most children count confidently to five with more able children counting to twenty. They draw simple shapes such as circles and triangles in the rice tray and name them correctly. They begin to develop an understanding of more and less as they sing songs like five little fishes. However, there are less opportunities in the daily routines to complete simple problem exercises. Children use mathematical language with understanding as they talk about things being bigger and smaller, longer and shorter and going under the table. They have good access to information technology and skilfully manoeuvre the mouse as they complete simple computer programmes often requiring minimal adult support.

Children exploring capacity enjoy pouring from one container to another. They competently match shapes, patterns and colours using a good range of resources and sequencing games.

Children learn to explore and investigate and look at changes as they talk about the weather and monitor the seasons. They develop a clear sense of time as they discuss what they have been doing at home or where they have been on holiday.

The children show a good awareness of space as they negotiate the outdoor area using wheeled vehicles. They balance and have opportunities to develop physically through the daily outdoor and indoor activities on offer. They have the benefit of a wide range of tools including pencils, crayons, paint, glue spreaders and different size paint brushes and this enables them to develop their fine motor skills.

Children express their own ideas confidently in creative work using a variety of media. They enjoy a wide range of different music and they joyfully join in with an increasing range of well known children's songs as they take turns to choose prompts from the song-box.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are seen as individuals and highly valued as such. They are developing a positive attitude to others through the provision of a broad range of resources which include displays, small world figures, dolls, books, dressing up clothes, jigsaws and cooking utensils and musical

instruments. Activities which enable the children to develop an understanding of their own culture and that of others are planned as they celebrate festivals throughout the year such as Mother's day, Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Children with additional needs are very well supported in the group and their needs are met through discussions with parents and other professionals. When the support for individuals is decided upon, individual packages are put together by the experienced special needs co-ordinator and may include support from external agencies. The centre supports children who have English as an additional language. They dual label resources and provide books in different languages. Children benefit from bi-lingual staff who can communicate with them in their own language and other staff who show skill at using expressions and gestures to communicate effectively.

Children are generally well behaved and listen and follow simple instructions. For example, they willingly help to tidy and to sweep up when asked. They are encouraged by practitioners to show concern for others, to share and take turns. They develop good manners with gentle reminders from staff should they forget. Children benefit from continuous praise and encouragement throughout the day. They are well supported and spoken to in a calm and positive manner, which serves to increase their self-esteem. Staff sensitively intervene when minor disputes erupt over toys and resources. Systems of reward such as stickers and stars are also used effectively to promote good behaviour. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They receive verbal information about the early years curriculum and the areas of learning, however, there is no written information given for them for their future reference. The key worker system is effective in providing parents with a point of contact and parents are invited to meet with them on a regular basis to discuss their child's achievements. Newsletters keep them fully informed about the topics the children are involved in and suggest ways parents can continue the learning at home. As a result children benefit from the positive relationships developed with parents and the joint approach to the children's learning. Parents spoken to at the inspection visit state they are very pleased with the quality of care offered; are satisfied that their opinions are valued and that their children's individual needs are catered for. They say their children look forward to attending, are happy and enjoy the activities provided and make good progress in their development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the good organisation. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to determine the suitability of staff members to safeguard the children attending the centre. Clear staffing procedures which include a detailed induction procedure; regular one to one meetings with an annual appraisal ensures staff are well supported and their training needs identified. This maintains the quality of care provided for children and their families.

Documentation is supported by policies and procedures which are regularly reviewed and are reflected in daily practice. Practitioners have a good understanding of the philosophy of the centre and are committed, displaying a high regard for the well-being of all children and an enthusiasm for the role that they do. They are all aware of policies and procedures and implement consistently to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. The senior practitioners are extremely knowledgeable and have work

well together to develop a supportive environment for both staff and children. The children are well protected and cared for by practitioners with a sound knowledge and understanding of child development and child protection. Records are meticulously maintained, remain confidential and emergency contact details are easily accessible.

The indoor space is organised well to maximise play opportunities for children. Outdoors the children enjoy the fresh air and there is space for them to run and enjoy a variety of activities. However, the outdoor play space needs to be further developed and organised to ensure the Early Years curriculum is fully reflected in the outdoor learning environment.

The leadership and management is good. Children benefit from the effective management and the input of the qualified teacher. Practitioner's roles are well defined and they work effectively together as a team to promote learning. Thorough and effective monitoring and assessment procedures are in place which ensure high quality provision. The managers have an good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting through a detailed and ongoing self assessment system. There is a high level of commitment to improvement, reflected in a strong emphasis on practitioner's development. This has a positive impact on the quality of children's learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the centre was asked to continue to develop methods of planning and observation to ensure they are linked to plan for the individual next steps in children's learning and include outdoor activities.

The centre has continued to develop their systems of planning and assessment. Practitioners make spontaneous and planned observations on the children which form part of their learning journals and individual profiles. These are used in the planning process. However, planning systems need to be developed further to clearly show the individual next steps in children's learning. Outdoors an area has been fenced for younger children and a safe surface laid and there are plans to purchase outdoor storage facilities. Outdoor boxes have been developed and a new climbing frame purchased. However, this not always available and the curriculum is not fully reflected in the outdoor area.

### **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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **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 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 the individual children's next steps in learning are clearly identified in planning systems (also applies to nursery education).

### **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):

- further develop the outdoor play facilities to ensure the early years curriculum is fully reflected in the outdoor learning environment (also applies to care)
- extend the written information for parents to include information about setting, the early years curriculum, in particular the areas of learning (also applies to care).

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)