

The Beacon Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY363360
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Inspector	Margaret Patricia Mellor
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Registered person	St Helens YMCA
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?

The Beacon Nursery was registered in 2007. It is managed by St. Helen's YMCA, and based in the YMCA building in walking distance of St Helens town centre. Children use four nursery rooms and sports hall for their care and activities. They share access to a secure, fully enclosed outdoor play area. It serves children from a wide catchment area.

The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 64 children aged under five years at any one time. It is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 and provides an all year round service with the exception of bank holidays. There are 53 children on roll aged from four months to three years. Of these, two children receive funding for nursery education. It supports children who have English as a second language.

The nursery employs 10 staff to work with the children, of whom, eight have an appropriate early years qualification. A cook is employed for preparing the children's meals, and support services are responsible for cleaning and general maintenance. Staff receive support from St Helens Sure Start and an early years teacher advisor.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and comfortable environment. Good health and hygiene procedures are consistently followed by staff, helping to prevent the spread of infection. Protective clothing is worn when nappy changing and for preparing or serving food. Colour coded clothes and anti-bacterial spray are used for wiping down surfaces. Children, themselves, learn about personal hygiene through their daily routine and discussions with staff. Wash hand posters displayed in the toilets act as a gentle reminder for older more-able children. They build on their awareness through planned activities, such as tempting tots sessions when they learn about dental hygiene.

Children benefit from healthy, nutritional food, with meals freshly prepared by the cook. At lunch time children tuck into sausage casserole with rice. They enjoy regular snacks of sliced fruit or crunchy vegetables, increasing their awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. Staff follow appropriate procedures for the safe storage and preparation of babies formula milk from home, contributing to their health needs. They are keen to share healthy eating ideas with the children through discussions and activities, for instance, a group game of five a day bingo. Children independently access drinks, with gentle reminders from staff in order to quench their thirst, and toddlers develop their coordination as they drink from feeder type cups.

Children's interest in a healthy lifestyle is promoted. Physical activity is incorporated into their daily routine. They become competent at using wheeled toys, and respond with gusto when playing ball or hoop games and exploring rhythm to music. They learn to balance on the stepping stones and appropriately when jumping off objects. Babies develop self-assurance pulling themselves into a standing position, and toddlers show curiosity as they freely explore their environment. Children have plenty of fun doing puzzles, cutting with scissors, putting shapes in boxes and threading beads or cotton reels. They begin to manoeuvre the mouse whilst playing on the computer, building their fine motor skills through fun, play and learning experiences

Children's health is safeguarded well. Individual dietary needs are communicated well, therefore parents' wishes are respected and children remain healthy. Minor injuries are dealt with appropriately. Six staff have a relevant first aid certificate and there are effective procedures for reviewing the contents of the first aid boxes. Medication is stored out of children's reach in a secure cabinet and staff act in children's best interests when they are ill, supported well by the detailed sick child and medication policies. Children use sun creams, wear hats and are offered plenty of drinks in hot weather, helping to protect their well-being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in the secure outdoor play area and move with confidence in nursery. The environment is very welcoming, spacious and affords children plenty of natural light. Access to the premises is vigilantly monitored by staff, supported by visitors records and effective procedures for the collection of children in an emergency. All the necessary safety equipment is in place, and there are effective procedures for checking the fire equipment and portable appliances. Staff carry out a daily written risk assessment of the premises and resources to effectively address any areas of concern, further minimising the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves.

Children freely and safely access the activities. The space is creatively organised by staff. Babies crawl over toys to seek out what they want to play with, whilst older more-able children confidently self-select play materials that interest them from the tables, trays and toy boxes at child height. There are a wide variety of toys for children to play, which stimulate their enjoyment and conversation. Children relax in comfort with their friends because the furniture and comfy floor cushions are suitable for their needs. However, large play equipment is limited, consequently, not all children are provided with appropriate challenges, for instance, climbing.

Children learn about personal safety during play. They have gentle reminders from staff about being careful when running around and looking where they are going. They regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure with staff. They build on their awareness of how to keep themselves safe through planned activities, such as visits from the community safety officer when they listen to stories about road safety. They sleep in safety because staff regularly record checks on them and are close at hand for reassurance when they wake. Children's well-being is further assured because there is a designated child protection co-ordinator. They have accessed relevant training. They demonstrate a strong understanding of the procedure to follow should they wish to report a concern, making the safeguarding of children in their care a high priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have plenty of fun in nursery and their development is promoted well. Staff are using the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They loosely plan a varied and flexible range of activities around children's interests, helping them to make good progress in their all-round development. They are beginning to use observation and assessment to monitor their progress. They have introduced children's individual profiles and creative files to track their development.

Children are busy and involved in their play. They happily choose whether to paint, play with the small world toys or sit at tables to join in picture games. They begin to make connections, for instance, pressing the buttons on the interactive toys to create visual and sound effects. They show lots of curiosity and wonderment in new events and objects. They taste different fruits, listen to music and respond gleefully when feeling the shaving foam or jelly on their hands or the different textures in the treasure baskets.

Children are happy and relaxed, promoting their personal, social and emotional development. Younger children gain confidence as they begin to play sociably alongside one another and with each other whilst staff are close by for reassurance. Staff form close and caring relationships with children, such as sitting, on the floor with them to support and motivate their learning. Children relish staff's close contact as they play with the toys or show signs of tiredness. They show a good awareness of how to behave.

Nursery Education.

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Staff are knowledgeable about how children learn and the Foundation Stage. They use planning to provide focused activities that are linked to the six areas of learning. Activities are evaluated and the information is used to inform future plans. Staff use observation to monitor the children's development. They complete children's individual profiles, highlighting their achieved stepping stones. Children's creative files are also used to highlight their development and learning.

Children are well supported. Staff are keen to motivate children's learning, skilfully judging when to become actively involved and when to allow them to independently explore. They use good questioning to motivate the children and clear, concise instructions are given. They explain the rules of the game when playing matching games and show a keen interest in what children do and say. They ask children about their painting and the models they make with the construction resources.

Children are given good opportunities to become familiar with their environment, living things and the natural world. They grow and nurture plants from seeds, and learn that they need sun, soil, light and water to grow. They have plenty of fun as they explore natural and made objects with magnifying glasses. They relish walks around the centre and develop a good appreciation of the wider community through festivals they celebrate. Children learn about technology, delighting in playing with the telephone, calculators or cash register. They begin to use reason and logic when manoeuvring the mouse, whilst playing on the computer.

Children are happy, interested and involved in their activities. Their independence is very much encouraged. Staff give them specific roles of responsibility, such as helping to set the table. They allow children to pour their own drinks, and encourage independent toileting and washing of hands. Children concentrate well and learn to problem solve, for instance, doing jigsaws and matching colours or shapes. They confidently count to 10 or more as they build with blocks or sort toys into boxes. Staff consolidate children's learning with rhythmic activities, displayed numerals and demonstrating time with the clock.

Children become confident communicators. During circle time they take turns to talk. They confidently initiate conversation with adults, chatting about what they do in nursery. They listen to stories with interest and have access to lots of books for enjoyment. They extend their learning that print carries meaning through displayed words and captions. Many opportunities are provided for children to practise their writing skills and mark making, with free access to a variety of writing materials and paper. They recognise their own name and sometimes the names of others.

Children are encouraged by staff to freely express their own ideas and feelings through art and craft. They explore colour, texture, shape and form through a range of media, such as collage, sticking and gloop. They respond with gusto as they run their fingers through the sand or water and explore the texture of paint with their feet. Children enjoy mimicking life at home, pretending to cook meals or do the ironing in the home area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle well and are happily joining in the activities. Staff work closely with parents to ensure they understand children's individual needs and home routine. Parents comment very positively about children's care, activities and progress they make. They are given a welcome pack as part of the enrolment procedures and there is good ongoing sharing of information. Notice boards and monthly newsletters keep parents up to date with developments. Staff take time to write the child's home link book and chat to parents about their day. The meaningful relationship between home and nursery contributes to children's continuity of care.

Partnership with parents of the nursery education is good. There is written information for parents about the children's six areas of learning goals. Questionnaires welcome parents comments on how they perceive the quality of care and learning can be improved, reassuring

them that children's interests come first. Parents happily support children's learning, for instance bringing objects in for the weeks colour table. They are welcome to see their child's profile at any time. There is no formal system for parents to meet with their child's key-worker, consequently they are not fully involved in their children's learning.

Children are happy in nursery and comfortable with staff, fostering their sense of belonging. There is a named coordinator for special education needs, helping to meet all the children's needs. Children attend from different family backgrounds and are encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards others. They play with different nationality dolls, push dolls in wheelchairs, dress up, do puzzles and look at dual language books. They develop their awareness of their own and other's culture through celebrations, such as birthdays, Easter and Saraswati Puja. Children have plenty of fun as they make sticky red pictures to promote good luck for Chinese New Year.

Children are cared for in a very positive environment where they are encouraged to feel good about themselves. They happily self-select activities, which help to make the environment relaxed, bright and attractive to them. They are well-behaved and co-operative. Staff use constant praise and encouragement to reinforce good behaviour. Children learn to share, take turns and respect each other. They become aware of helping others, for instance, staff organise sponsored charitable fundraising events with the children. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's well-being is promoted and safeguarded in a caring environment. Staff recruitment and vetting procedures for adults who care for the children are rigorous. There is written confirmation that staff are vetted and effective procedures so persons not vetted are not unattended with children. The formal induction programme ensures that nursery policies are understood by staff and work well in practice. Training, such as first aid, safeguarding and risk assessment also assist staff in providing a good service for the children. The regulatory documentation, which includes accident, medication and attendance records is maintained well, and stored with regard for confidentiality issues.

Children benefit from good adult support. They are cared for in four age related groups and staffing ratios afford children high levels of individual and group support. Every child has a named key-worker, contributing to their happiness and strong sense of belonging. The environment is creatively organised by staff allowing for both active play and relaxation. There is a good balance of activities, assisting children to develop their independence and create friendships. Children gain confidence, pursuing activities that appeal to them with their friends. The garden area is still being developed, therefore, opportunities for children's continuous play is not yet fully promoted.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager effectively monitors the activity plans, and organises regular staff meetings, which help staff share ideas. There is a strong commitment to improving the care and education for all children. Since registration the manager has organised staff supervision and appraisal sessions. Staff are provided with good opportunities to enhance their own self development. They have access to resources materials and regularly attend training events, for instance, 'Birth to three matters', 'Assessment' and 'Early Years Foundation Stage'. Information is shared regularly with parents, further contributing to the quality of care and learning offered.

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 complaint 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 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):

- improve upon the current range of large play resources to ensure all children are sufficiently challenged
- continue to develop the children's outdoor play area.

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):

- continue to develop opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's 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