

# Early Years Support Team Specialist Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY363226
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 July 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Andrews

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<b>Registered person</b>	Leicester City Council
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Early Years Support Team Specialist Nursery is run by the Local Authority. It was registered in 2007 and operates from a single storey building with access to safely enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery is situated in the city of Leicester.

A maximum of 15 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09:00 to 15:00 during term-time. There are currently 29 children aged from two to five years on roll and all receive funding for nursery education. Children come primarily from within the city of Leicester.

The nursery is a specialist setting providing care and education for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This includes a number of children for whom English is an additional language.

The setting employs a wide range of qualified teachers, nursery nurses and care staff. Additional practitioners include physiotherapists, occupational therapist, music therapist, speech and language therapist and an ICT specialist teacher.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an extremely welcoming, clean and spacious environment. Children's health is very well promoted through the excellent range of policy, procedures and practice issues that are meticulously implemented by knowledgeable and experienced staff. This ensures children's complex medical needs are fully addressed. Staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications, therefore, they are able to respond positively should a child become unwell or have an accident whilst in their care.

Children's specific care needs are carefully recorded and met according to the physical, learning and development requirements for each child. Excellent links with parents, mainstream school, medical specialists and practitioners such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language, music therapists and ICT specialist teachers, ensure continuity of care for all children.

Given that many of the children who attend the nursery are particularly vulnerable to the risk of infection, the setting operates an extremely rigorous approach to health and hygiene. High standards of personal hygiene are implemented to ensure children remain clean and comfortable. Children wash their hands before mealtimes and after playing outdoors. Staff are scrupulous in their attention to maintain appropriate practices when assisting children with toileting. For example, using disposable gloves and aprons, then ensuring changing surface beds are cleansed and disposable products such as wet wipes, tissues and soiled items are disposed of appropriately. Therefore, the risk of cross-infection is minimised and children's health and welfare is promoted. Particular care is taken by staff to ensure that children's privacy and dignity is maintained when receiving personal care.

Children have fresh air and exercise as they play outdoor safely and benefit from suitable shade from the hot summer sunshine provided by the fixed awnings and the willow 'igloo'. Care is also taken by staff to protect children from the harmful rays, by the use of sunblock and careful supervision.

Children have access to a spacious environment and an extensive range of resources to meet their individual physical and developmental needs. Every step is taken to ensure children's comfort and physical health is taken into account through a wide range of physical activities and learning opportunities to enhance their development. This includes daily opportunities for children to have exercise and fresh air outdoors. Qualified physiotherapists work with staff and children to create individual programs for the children, to strengthen their bodies and aid their mobility. Music is used in the classroom with small groups of children or individually with the specialist music therapist. This invites and encourages children's movement and also enables them to be calm and relaxed. Equipment such as a parachute is used, so that children can enjoy its sound and movement, watching the colours and feeling its texture.

The more physically able children use the fixed apparatus outdoors enabling them to crawl, roll, climb, jump and run. Excellent use is made of the soft play area, sensory room and the Jacuzzi where children of all abilities can lay, roll, reach and touch, find freedom of movement or simply relax. Tactile and sensory experiences are abundant, as is children's use of small manipulative equipment, tools and materials, where developmentally appropriate, such as paintbrushes, sand toys, musical instruments and crayons. These provide children with valuable opportunities to explore, sounds, textures, shapes and forms. A range of programmable toys

delight children with audio and visual rewards. Physiotherapist specialists work with individual children promoting their movement, flexibility and co-ordination.

Healthy eating is promoted and children gain awareness through topics and activities such as food tasting. Children eat together in a positive social environment in a designated dining area and their specific nutritional needs are met as required. Careful consideration is given to ensure the meals meet children's dietary requirements and are provided in an appropriate form, as children have varying needs regarding chewing and swallowing. Staff know children extremely well, often working with them in mainstream school as well as linking with their home. The designated member of staff is assigned to assist with feeding their key children. Mealtimes are used as social occasions, so children develop their social skills as they enjoy the meals provided. The more able children are developing their independence as they are encouraged to make choices and take their plate back to the serving hatch. Appropriate and skilful arrangements are made by competent staff for children who have to take liquid feed by tube. Drinks and regular fluid intakes are readily provided for the children throughout the day so that they remain well-hydrated.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The nursery operates in spacious well-designed premises that ensure appropriate accessibility for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The rooms are provided with appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation and the main classrooms have direct access to safely enclosed outdoor play areas. Additional rooms are used for specialist therapy sessions such as music therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy. Further resources that enhance children's care are provided with the sensory room, Jacuzzi and a soft play room.

The children have access to a vast range of toys, play equipment and specialist resources to meet the needs of children across the age and ability range. Toys and equipment are safe, meet appropriate safety standards and staff at the nursery fully understand the importance of safety issues. They implement highly effective procedures and vigilant practices, so that risks of accidental injury to children are minimised. For example, children's furniture and equipment is assessed as meeting individual children's needs; toys and equipment are specifically placed at an appropriate height so that children may play in safety. When necessary appropriate apparatus such as hoists are used to move children comfortably and safely from their chairs to the floor. Steps are taken to ensure toys and equipment promote diversity and reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability.

An extremely well organised toy library is established on-site. This offers a huge range of selected items to support each of the six areas of learning and to meet children's individual developmental needs. The toy library is accessed by the nursery, parents, childcare professionals, therapists and specialist inclusion workers. It is a truly valuable and much used resource.

Security is managed extremely well and every aspect of the nursery's activities is risk assessed to ensure children's safety. Children are transported to the nursery in local authority vehicles or by taxi with escorts. Staff members meticulously record children's attendance and an accurate record is kept of visitors. External and indoor security is managed exceptionally well by the use of door codes, therefore, no unauthorised person may gain access to the children. A fire evacuation plan, detection and fire fighting equipment is in place and checked annually. Fire evacuation drills are conducted on a regular basis, therefore, staff are fully aware of the

procedures to be followed in a real emergency and consequently children's welfare is safeguarded.

Safety is promoted well as comprehensive risk assessments have been thoroughly conducted. High double handles are fitted to each of the classroom doors, therefore, children cannot leave the area without supervision. Plug socket covers are in place, floor surfaces are safe and equipment meets appropriate safety standards. Children are always within the sight and hearing of staff members. An extremely high staff ratio ensures the supervision of children is at the highest standard. Therefore, children can play and learn in a safe environment.

Staff have excellent knowledge and awareness of child protection issues. They recognise the signs and the symptoms of abuse, are clear about reporting procedures and their duty to protect the children in their care. The setting has a copy of the 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' leaflet and the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance. Therefore, children are protected and their welfare safeguarded.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children benefit immensely from being part of this vibrant specialist nursery. They thrive in its bright, attractive and welcoming environment. Each room is set out with exciting areas of opportunity and challenge for children to explore with an extensive range of resources to support their individual development. All teaching, care and specialist staff respond exceptionally well to the children, providing lots of eye contact, engagement, praise and encouragement.

Each day is very well organised and planned to ensure all areas of development are covered. It is also flexible and encourages children's individual choices allowing them, where possible, to direct their own play with staff guidance, who skilfully adapt activities to match children's abilities and interests. All children enjoy regular outdoor play sessions and have a vast range of sensory experiences such as listening to and making music with a variety of different instruments, using the Jacuzzi and experiencing a range of stimulation in the sensory room through light and sound.

Staff are all very intuitive to the children's individual needs, clearly enjoy sharing activities with them and extending these through various prompts and questions. All children's progress is exceptionally well monitored by staff, who are constantly alert, making regular observations which are all carefully discussed, evaluated and are incorporated into the planning for children's next steps.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. All children have significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities, yet are making exceptional individual progress towards the early learning goals. All those who work with the children have a wonderful rapport with them and know exactly how to engage their interests and extend their natural curiosity and enthusiasm. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and have created a very attractive and vibrant learning environment, which is superbly supported by an excellent range of resources covering all areas of learning.

There is a clear routine to the day, where children spend time in small groups or work individually with professional therapists or specialist areas, dependent upon their individual needs and then

come together in a social environment at mealtimes. Where appropriate for more mobile children, there is an excellent balance of independent, free flow play, small group time and focused individual activities. Staff know the children extremely well and form good, secure and trusting relationships. The high adult to child ratio and key working approach, ensures children are able to concentrate and be supported exceptionally well, so that they may fully engage in activities with enthusiasm and purpose. Activities are planned to enhance children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children are developing their competencies across the four aspects of communication which are, speaking, listening, reading and writing. Verbal communication is ably supported by the use of Makaton in every aspect of the nursery's learning and development program. Steps are taken to sustain attentive listening and to encourage children to respond to what they have heard or seen. Children listen with enjoyment and respond with great excitement to stories, songs and a range of music, rhymes and poems. 'Good morning sessions' involve individual children being shown a photograph of themselves with their printed name and staff signing as they sing and greet each child. Other visual prompts are used throughout the day to effectively show the children what will be happening next. For example, a picture of 'a cup' before drinks time or 'a clean nappy' to depict toileting time. Programmable toys are used to reward children with audible and visual responses; specialist speech, language and music therapists, play an extremely valuable part in mapping children's individual development.

Numbers are prominently depicted on wall displays throughout the nursery. Children are counting and using numbers in songs, music and physiotherapy sessions. For example, staff working with individual children, exercising their limbs and rolling them on the floor mat, whilst singing 'There were three in the bed and the little one said roll over'. Depending upon their level of understanding and ability, children are skilfully encouraged to evaluate patterns, space, shape and measurement. For example, children choosing and responding to geometric patterns on the computer program or selecting either the 'big' or the 'little' bells in music therapy sessions.

Every opportunity is seized to help children begin to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first-hand experiences in this interesting and stimulating environment. They have excellent opportunities to observe, explore, question and be curious. Superb use is made of the additional facilities such as the soft play area, hydrotherapy and specialist sensory room where individual staff work with children. Outdoor experiences are created that further enhance children's sensory perception. For example, laying beneath the willow 'igloo', feeling the breeze on their face, watching the clouds and the leaves move above them.

Children are exposed to a wide range of creative experiences and they delight in exploring textures such as sand, water, corn flour, crumpled aluminium foil and mirrors. They enjoy cooking, exploring smells and tastes. They benefit immensely from a range of imaginative and creative art experiences such as painting, drawing and collage. For example, creating an 'under the sea/fish collage' which is displayed and hanging from the classroom ceiling. Dependent upon their level of understanding and development, children are beginning to understand about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people. Celebrations such as Diwali, Chinese New Year, Christmas and Easter are an integral part of planned experiences.

Throughout their time at the nursery, all children are valued as individuals and their special needs are meticulously addressed to enable them to reach their full potential. They are well

supported by diligent, enthusiastic and highly skilled staff who genuinely want to share with them the fun and excitement of developing and learning a whole range of different things.

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

The provision is outstanding.

In every aspect of the care and education of children, it is clear that equality of opportunity is always promoted. Children are really valued as individuals at this specialist nursery where staff know them all extremely well and give them the optimum of opportunities to find and develop to their full potential. All relevant information is gathered from the parents and shared carefully at the time a child is placed at the setting, so that staff really understand children's individual preferences, needs and take into account their complex medical conditions, learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff really value children's uniqueness and maximise the opportunities for them to liaise closely with parents and carers on an ongoing basis. They do this effectively through daily diaries and communication with inclusion support staff and specialist therapists.

Children enjoy a selection of different experiences with visitors and volunteers to the nursery. They have many opportunities to go out on trips to places and community facilities such as the Sure Start sensory garden, zoo, local parks and supermarkets, which enhances their feelings of belonging to the local and wider community. Special events are arranged such as 'family fun days' where nursery staff, parents, children and the local community come together in a social environment. The availability of toys and equipment that reflect diversity and the celebration of multicultural festivals including Diwali, Chinese New Year, Easter and Christmas, further extends children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

The focus of this nursery wholeheartedly embraces inclusion in every aspect of its care and education program. Staff liaise carefully with parents and specialist practitioners to find the best ways to engage and encourage children. Staff understand how to ensure all children are involved appropriately by using an imaginative array of tools such as visual timetables, which helps all children to feel included. Every effort is made to ensure a rigorous approach is applied to plan for individual children's development so that they may reach their full potential. Children's behaviour is very well managed and staff focus on providing a happy, positive environment where children flourish. They provide excellent role models, always saying 'please' and 'thank you' to the children and expecting them to do the same in return. They always find time to talk and respond to the children and offer them constant praise and encouragement. Where children are upset or unwell, staff sensitively offer reassurance, cuddles and soothing attention. Consequently, this means that children are very comfortable in this environment and therefore, benefit fully from all the opportunities they are offered. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents, when consulted, speak favourably of the care and education received by their children. They feel listened to, consulted and their views valued. This relationship is central to the work of the staff at this nursery and they fully respect the essential role parents play in the children's learning and development. Therefore, staff strive from the onset to establish very positive relationships with parents and keep them fully informed about the nursery, their children's progress and about the Early Years Foundation Stage .

All parents receive detailed information at the time the child is placed at the setting and parents are encouraged to settle their child and liaise closely with their child's key person. Effective diary systems are established as many children are transported to and from the setting by local

authority transport or by taxi. This plays a vital part in the information sharing process to ensure children's individual needs are identified and met. Regular review meetings and a parents' support group offers parents planned and spontaneous opportunities for ongoing discussion and support. All these initiatives give parents a clear insight into children's learning and development. This serves to cement an excellent partnership between parents and staff so that they work effectively together to promote the best possible outcomes for the children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The children in the nursery benefit immensely from the exceptionally well-organised routines, stimulating and engaging programme of activities. The managers are very active within the nursery, supporting and inspiring staff. They are passionate in their commitment to provide a quality setting for young children. There is an excellent team of enthusiastic, highly skilled and experienced staff who form a very happy and harmonious group, whose positive approach succeeds in supporting all children as individuals. There are clear procedures to ensure that no unauthorised adults have unsupervised access to the children and rigorous recruitment, selection and induction procedures to ensure the suitability of those working with the children. Well-managed appraisal systems are in place and there are many opportunities to develop staff's knowledge and practice with relevant training. Staff meet together frequently to raise any issues and to cascade training and knowledge so that they are all kept fully informed.

All documentation for the efficient and safe management of the nursery are in place and regularly reviewed. This includes a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that support and effectively underpin the quality of service offered. All staff are fully aware of the daily records required to be kept and carry these out efficiently. Staff are aware of the need to respect confidentiality and the management team fully understand their responsibility to keep Ofsted informed of any changes or significant events.

The leadership and management of the nursery is outstanding. Managers keep themselves very well informed of the latest childcare developments. This means they are always there to monitor practice, support and inspire their staff. Consequently, all staff have a clear understanding of the new initiatives and are already building these into planning and assessment methods. Staff are constantly evaluating their programme to ensure it is effective for the children and they are very clearly able to demonstrate how they use assessments to plan for children's next steps. All staff involved in the Foundation Stage have a very good understanding of how children learn and work very well together to ensure children have many different and exciting experiences tailor-made to their individual needs. They display a total commitment to helping all children achieve their full potential, carefully taking into account children's complex medical needs, their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Consequently every child is valued and thrives in this highly inspiring environment.

Overall children's need are met.

## **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**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

## **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)