

The Sheffield College Nursery & Childcare Service: Castle

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	300858
Inspection date	20/11/2008
Inspector	Geneen Yvonne Hulse-Brown
Setting address	Castle Centre, Granville Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S2 2RL
Telephone number	0114 260 2125 or 0114 260 3213
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

The Sheffield College Nursery and Childcare Service Castle opened in 1988, moving to a purpose built unit on the college campus in September 2008. It is located just outside Sheffield city centre and close to local amenities. The nursery serves the local and wider community and takes children of staff and students at the college. There are three large playrooms and a large secure covered and open outdoor play area, plus offices, laundry, toilets, kitchen, staff room and storage space. The premises are accessed via a flat egress to the front door.

A maximum of 60 children aged from three months to eight years may attend the nursery at any one time. There are presently 101 children attending in the early years age group. The group supports children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary part of the Childcare Register. The group offers full day care Monday to Friday all year round and children attend for a variety of sessions per week between 08.00 and 18.00. A team of 16 staff work with the children and all hold early years qualifications. In addition the nursery employs two ancillary workers who support children at lunchtimes.

The setting receives support from the local authority community teachers and special educational needs support workers. The nursery have achieved Investors in People status and the Gold award for Pathways to Quality.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children are highly motivated in a stimulating and challenging environment, due to well experienced staff planning a broad range of exciting activities personalized to their individual needs. Staff establish strong partnerships with parents and carers, successfully developing an extensive awareness of the children's diverse backgrounds. Staff effectively observe and record children's progress and continue to work with parents to involve them in identifying where children are at and the next steps in the learning process. There is a firm commitment to self-evaluation for the continuous development of the provision, through training, quality assurance and ongoing reflection.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- continue to monitor planning systems to ensure they meet the needs of all children
- continue to enable parents to have regular opportunities to add to children's records.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Strong leadership and management of the nursery motivate staff commitment to developing good quality practice. Effectively supported staff ensure they meet the needs of all children, as they plan stimulating activities that challenge and extend them. The established team has increased following a move to larger premises as they continue to develop strong and trusting relationships with all users, and ensure continuity for the children. All staff demonstrate a very good awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, which supports them to complete comprehensive observations.

Robust systems are in place for recruitment, selection and monitoring to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children, supported by appraisals and regular opportunities to discuss and evaluate the service provided. There is a high commitment to training and development for all staff as they access in-house and external opportunities. The senior team recognises the importance of self-evaluation to monitor practice and are continuing to develop this process, by involving the whole staff team in discussions and forward planning. Self-evaluation accurately identifies the settings strengths and areas for improvement. The nursery has successfully completed the 'Pathways to Quality' assurance scheme.

Enthusiastic staff work well with parents and carers to ensure consistent and effective sharing of children's progress and achievements. Parents share their knowledge of the children with staff and receive daily updates of what the children have been doing. However, the nursery has identified the importance of finding additional ways to enable parents to add to their children's development records. Parents are relaxed and approach staff with confidence at the beginning and end of sessions. The nursery continues to develop links with local schools, although children attending move on to a variety of schools outside the local area. Transitions documents are shared with all schools to inform of children's understanding and achievements. Pictorial prompts and Makaton helps children understand daily routines and assists communication where English is not the first language.

Staff are very experienced, demonstrating a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children. Consistent implementation of a very comprehensive range of policy and procedures successfully promotes children's welfare. Effective deployment of staff and resources ensures that children extend their independence and actively manage their own safety in a well-supervised environment. Extensive risk assessments are in place, with regular reviews completed to identify changes and work needed. Policies and procedures fully reflect the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. These are available to parents in the nursery reception, with shortened policy information contained in their personal copy of the nursery booklet.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are very enthusiastic and motivated as they enjoy a wide range of stimulating experiences, playing with their friends in a fun environment. They actively plan their own time, making choices of where to play and what to do, as they progress well in all areas of learning. Children move freely between indoor and outdoor activities, developing their confidence and independence. An innovatively planned outdoor area enables the children to play out in all weathers, providing an additional playroom for all ages. Children enthusiastically play at being builders and travel agents, climb and balance with increasing skill and explore craft materials with excitement. Staff's good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage enables them to plan a broad selection of well-planned activities based on all areas of learning that effectively promote children's learning and development. They are in the process of reviewing and adopting planning and assessment systems based on the new framework, however, they are in their infancy and do not fully reflect how they meet children's individual needs.

Children enthusiastically enjoy number, as they count the number of animals on a computer game and the number of children present. They skilfully make patterns using a variety of mediums and use maths language as part of everyday tasks. Children use early problem-solving skills as they build bricks and work out how much it costs for a holiday in the travel agents. Free access to a wide range of books introduces children to new vocabulary, as they listen intently to stories, predicting familiar outcomes. Children chatter together as they act out roles in the shop and café. Older children skilfully spell out letters and find their name cards as they self-register and go for snack. Children of all ages enthusiastically enjoy mark making using a variety of mediums, as they paint, chalk and make lists in role plays.

Children develop an excellent understanding of their environment as they investigate indoors and outdoors with increasing motivation. Babies and non-mobile children crawl around the safe and secure outdoor area, alongside the older children as they climb, act out roles and explore musical instruments in a well-planned music area. Physical development is well promoted as children undertake numerous opportunities to extend their small and large motor skills. They enjoy kicking and throwing balls, building blocks to balance on and spoon sand into pots with increasing skill. Children enjoy outings to the park and other parts of the college campus, such as to buy bread from the bakery for snack.

Consistent praise and encouragement from staff ensure that children develop high levels of self-esteem. Children are respected and valued and in turn learn to manage their own behaviour, take turns and share. They are very confident as they approach visitors to the setting, including them in their play, showing what they have made with pride and serving them food in the café. Babies and young children show a keen interest and curiosity in the inspector's laptop, as they press buttons with increasing competence. Well-resourced craft areas for all ages provide children with many opportunities to explore their natural creativity, actively plan role plays and recall simple storylines. Children enthusiastically explore textures as they let flour and lentils slide through their fingers, taste lemons and

limes as part of a senses activity. Younger children enjoy tactile experiences as they explore with different materials and play dough squeezing and moulding it into shapes. Good photographic evidence on displays and in children's records clearly shows their progress and achievements. All areas of the nursery have pictorial displays showing children at play and learning objectives.

Children's health and well-being are promoted successfully as staff talk to children about healthy eating at mealtimes. Healthy eating topics introduce children to what foods are good for them and how they help us grow. Children learn how to keep themselves safe, as staff sensitively remind them to take care when climbing, not to run indoors and take care not to step on crawling babies' fingers.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.