

Spitalfields Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY280862
Inspection date	02/06/2009
Inspector	Vivienne Rose
Setting address	21 Lamb Street, London, E1 6EA
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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 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 Spitalfields Children's Centre opened in 1998 and is part of the chain of Bright Horizons Family Solutions. It operates from three rooms in a purpose built premises close to Spitalfields market in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. It serves families who live or work in the local area. The group is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

The centre is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 50 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 46 children from eight months to under five years on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has experience of supporting children with special educational needs. The setting also offers a 'Back-up' service for emergency childcare for local financial companies in the area and a holiday play scheme service.

There are 16 members of staff, 12 of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children are provided with a stimulating learning environment where they experience a wide range of activities to promote their learning and development. Partnership with parents and carers is a strength of the setting. This ensures that children's welfare and learning is supported. While all children are included and treated with equal respect, resources to promote positive images are limited and the planning for more able children sometimes lacks sufficient challenge. The setting has clear self-evaluation systems in place and as a consequence, any areas for improvement are prioritised by staff who constantly re-evaluate their practice and procedures. This supports the organisation and safety of the children within the setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- make sure that children are offered appropriate challenges in all six areas of learning; pay particular attention to giving children the opportunities to learn the sounds and letters of words and to count and calculate in everyday routines
- review the key person system to ensure that children are provided with consistency of care to promote their well-being.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager has implemented self-evaluation systems and as a result has a clear understanding of the centres strengths and successful steps have been put in place to address the areas that need improving. In addition, the views of parents and carers are considered as part of their regular website newsletter and surveys. There is a key person system in place and staff have a clear understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Staff in the baby room are warm and caring and ratios are well maintained to support the needs of children. Although recent changes to key persons in the baby room has led to some inconsistencies in the record keeping for the children.

In addition to the settings main provision the centre provides a 'Back-up' system which provides emergency places for children. This system is well organised and records are maintained which meet the security and educational needs of the children. Staff recognise that children who attend for occasional days on this scheme need additional support to enable them to feel secure and to ensure their well-being.

There are effective policies and procedures in place to maintain practice which are regularly updated. These include clear policies to support children with learning difficulties and or/disabilities and those children who are bi-lingual.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure environment. Staff are secure in their knowledge of child protection matters and implement these effectively to ensure children's well-being is given priority. Staff are well deployed in the free-flow environment and carry out risk assessments which successfully minimise the risks of accidental injury. In addition there are robust systems in place to ensure that those working with children are suitable to do so.

Parents and carers are actively encouraged to be involved in sharing information about the children and their interests and this supports the curriculum planning process. The introduction of the 'My Family' photo display in the baby room helps children to feel at home and settled. Furthermore regular feedback is given to all parents to support continuity of care.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children play in a happy, relaxed, busy environment where there are effective systems in place to identify children's starting points and most assessments are successful. Clear observations and individual learning plans identify the progress that children are making; this indicates the adults have a good understanding of development and how they can promote further progress and the next steps for the children. This ensures that most children are actively engaged whilst in the setting. Generally children are achieving well in most areas of learning and staff are very aware of the individual interests and achievements. Children's 'Learning Journals' contain collected work and individual plans, evaluations and parents comments. However, the system is used are still new to practitioners and some

staff lack confidence about some of the processes. However, the manager is addressing this with staff and support is being given. Children are motivated and eager to learn and demonstrate high levels of independence. They have good relationships with the staff and most children behave well. While staff encourage children to share and take turns and children are praised for their efforts there are some inconsistencies in the strategies used to reinforce children's understanding when challenging behaviour occurs.

The layout and accessibility of resources in the setting in defined areas of learning is good and enables children to make choices. For example, children access a good selection of creative materials, in the mark making areas and they enjoy the book area choosing the books they like best, looking at the independently and asking for stories when they want them. Staff encourage children to practise their mark making skills which includes practising their early writing skills on the outdoor chalk board with chunky chinks. As a consequence, children are progressing in their skills to support their future economic well-being. Children enjoy writing for a purpose when they make lists and follow and they begin to recognise the shapes of letters and numbers. However; there are fewer opportunities for the children to count and calculate and to problem solve in everyday situations and to recognise the sounds of letters and words.

Pre-school children relish group activities such as making the seaside outside with sand from the sand tray taking off their shoes and feeling the sand between their toes. Children thoroughly enjoy mixing the paint and to making the play dough using a recipe. They make patterns with glue and coloured sand to encourage their creativity and skills and ideas, most of the time children are questioned effectively to encourage their learning and understanding. Children play with dough, cut with scissors and use sellotape. They sprinkle glitter and use construction resources to develop their finer skills. Younger children and babies have the opportunity to stretch and reach for toys and are encouraged by staff to learn to pull themselves up to develop their confidence in their walking skills. Further they are helped to develop physical skills through climbing and balancing. They use treasure baskets, sand and messy play with paint to develop their sensory skills.

They access a wide variety of resources to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world such as water and sand play, looking at shells through a magnifying glass. Recent projects which have evolved from children's interests include looking at caterpillars which eventually matured to butterflies and making their own robot out of boxes, which eventually had a robot baby. Older and younger children come together in the free-flow environment and as a result there are times when younger children have fewer opportunities to be quiet and more reflective to enable them communicate their ideas in small groups. In addition some of the more able children are not always fully challenged to promote all areas of their development. However, staff are considering ways to provide smaller group activities to enable children to fully participate in activities to ensure that their needs are best met.

Children enjoy the interaction with staff as they sit with practitioners and engage in conversations with them. They particularly enjoy mealtimes when they lay the tables with their named place mats and serve themselves to develop their

independence and choice. Self-esteem is further developed when they clear away their plates after use.

Children's health and well-being is supported when they are encouraged to blow their noses on tissues which are easily accessible. They wash their hands before meal times and after playing in the garden. In addition children are offered healthy snacks and meals and water is readily accessible to children at all times. All children enjoy their outdoor play experiences which are accessible throughout the day. Here they can access life play, balancing, dancing and riding bikes to encourage their physical development. There are also regular opportunities for the babies to access the outdoor area and to gain the benefits of fresh air and to promote their well-being. Opportunities for the children to access shaded areas in the garden are limited in hot weather and staff ensure that children wear hats and sun cream. Staff regularly remind children to help themselves to water and to come inside for short breaks. The setting has recognised this as an area for improvement to ensure the welfare of children.

Children are learning appropriate rules about how to keep themselves safe for example, sitting on chairs properly and how to hold scissors safely. The setting places appropriate emphasis on ensuring that practice is inclusive for all children and families however; there are limited displays of positive images within the centre to encourage children awareness of the wider world. Practitioners work closely with parents to ensure that key words in a child's home language are sought in addition, the staff have worked with parents to provide books that the children can access with simple picture prompts in various languages which are familiar to them which support their understanding and recognition of their home language.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. There is regular communication with parents of all the children including those on the 'Back-up' system. Learning journals are shared and parents are given the opportunities to contribute information on a regular basis about the children's interests from home which staff then incorporate into their daily planning. The organisation has a system, both externally and internally, whereby parents can make regular comments about the provision and staff communication and the centres practice. Evidence demonstrates that the parents are very happy, in particular they value the sensitive staff who are enthusiastic and supportive. The centre has plans to set up a parent's forum in the form of a committee in the future to further develop this partnership.

Documentation to safeguard children is in place which includes children's attendance details, all medical and dietary needs of children and the relevant permission details. There are effective policies are in place to support practice and these are shared with parents and carers.

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

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met