

Soho Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

14/01/2010

Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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.

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Description of the setting

Soho Children's Centre opened in 2006. It operates from purpose-built premises and serves children in the local community and surrounding areas. It is situated in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. All children attending the nursery share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm all year round, with the exception of bank holidays. Access to the building is on ground floor level.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 45 children on roll in the early years age range. The nursery is in receipt of funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 12 members of staff including the manager employed at the setting, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging from NVQ level 3 or equivalent to early years degree level.

The nursery receives support from the Early Years Advisor, Early Years Teacher and the Birmingham local authority early years service.

The Children's Centre offers training for parents, stay and play sessions, advice and drop in sessions, outreach work, health and family support and parents groups, all determined by local needs.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The nursery manager and the staff team work effectively together to create a stimulating and supportive environment where children feel settled, safe and secure. Children make good progress in their development and learning as staff understand how to plan, observe and assess their attainment. There is a strong emphasis on identifying individual children's needs and working cohesively with parents and other professionals to support each child in working towards their full potential given their differing starting points. Whilst the practice within the setting is very positive and staff are aware of the key strengths of the provision, the process for evaluating the quality and impact is not fully developed. This results in some gaps in the full implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) including a breach of legal requirements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- identify a named deputy who is able to take charge in the absence of the manager (Suitable People)

18/02/2010

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

- improve the risk assessments to ensure that potential hazards are fully identified and addressed to minimise risk to children
- include dates on all of the observations and assessments of children's attainment to enable tracking of their learning and development to be more systematic

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The child protection procedures for the safeguarding of children in the setting are highly effective. Each member of the staff team demonstrates a thorough understanding of the robust processes that can be implemented in close liaison with other professionals in order to promote the welfare and safety of all children. Staff recruitment and selection is stringent with full clearances undertaken and all staff within the setting are qualified to at least level three, thereby exceeding the minimum requirements. However, the setting does not currently have a named deputy to take charge in the absence of the manager. This is a breach of legal requirements and has the potential to hinder the effective operation of the provision. General risk assessments are undertaken by the health and safety staff within the children's centre with additional annual checks for the main nursery in place. Whilst the generic assessment includes measures to be taken in the event of the current inclement weather, nursery staff have not undertaken a risk assessment pertinent to the safety of the children in each care base. There are visual checks done throughout the day and children are reminded by staff about taking care as they come in after playing outside in the snow. However, these are not always effective in minimising hazards to children such as the trailing wires in close proximity to the interactive white board and a number of electrical sockets uncovered.

Inclusive practice is a key strength in the setting. Each child and their family is highly respected and valued by the management and staff team. There are open and respectful relationships fostered with parents, carers and other professionals in order to work together to meet individual needs and support each child to achieve, develop social skills and enjoy their early education experiences. This is particularly effective because staff undertake home visits to families prior to placements beginning, starting off the process of partnership working and acknowledging the impact children's home lives has on their on-going attainment. Staff show a genuine enjoyment of their work, supported in training by the manager and upper line managers to hone their skills and knowledge. As a result, staff take pride in sharing new ideas and updated practice such as the recent trial of a different way of observing and assessing progress and the extension of the use of sign language across each care base. Although the manager and the staff have a clear vision of the future, the self-evaluation process is not fully developed or utilised to inform

the overall review of daily practice or evaluate the impact of changes made. Resources are used effectively to support children's learning and development and the extension of their awareness of differences in society.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children make good progress in all areas of learning, supported in achieving because staff have a sound knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children delight in sharing their 'special books' with each other, their families and visitors. They can access these easily, make choices about what photographs and pieces of art work are included, with older children gluing the items in themselves. Staff share children's achievements verbally and in written form, collating these regularly to ensure any gaps in attainment can be identified and acted upon as appropriate. Some of the records, however, are not clearly dated, hindering how progress can be systematically tracked. Each key person knows their children well and drafts a highly personal account every three months of each child's development, citing aspects of their characters and showing how these contribute to the planning and activities offered to extend, challenge and support each child. Behaviour is managed effectively as children follow the positive role models offered by the staff who display consistency and fairness in encouraging children to share, take turns and follow the boundaries within the familiar routines and expectations.

High levels of background information are discussed with parents and carers in order to build a clear picture of each child's needs and skills. Where additional needs are identified, staff explore various strategies to employ in order to include every child. Parents speak of their children picking up some of the sign language being used and the various home languages and cultural backgrounds of the families in the community are celebrated and respected. Children make excellent use of community resources such as visiting a nearby mosque, the pictures of which spark a discussion about the décor they saw there and how they had to be very quiet. An earlier visit to the seaside is also fondly remembered as children refer to the photographic display and talk about their parents having come along too. Babies and toddlers have their needs fully met, with details of sleep and feeding routines carefully recorded and adhered to, promoting consistency with home wherever appropriate. They seek out adults and peers alike, sharing experiences with glee, such as discovering the sound made by the 'ocean drum' and discovering the rotating properties of the mirrored carousel toy and the sand wheel. Children in each base access computers with confidence and familiarity, showing skills in mouse control and in following directions from relevant on-screen games, including number and problem solving games. Discovering the texture and consistency of cornflour gloop brings smiles to children's faces, particularly babies and young toddlers trying this for the first time. Older children are able to name many of the letters from their names, with a phonic link to letters and sounds. One child exclaims with delight that the X is like the 'X on telly'.

Children's health and well-being is fully endorsed by the clear routines they follow with familiarity. They access fresh air outdoors each day regardless of weather conditions. enjoying mother nature at her best during the recent heavy snow falls.

Great fun is had by each age group as they create their snowmen, discover the tracks their boots and Wellingtons make in the snow and investigate the melting properties of snow and ice when brought indoors. Children understand the need to keep safe as they show responsibility in tidying away their resources and games with care. Some hazards are identified such as the wet floor and trailing wires and staff remind the children about taking care as the risks have not yet been fully addressed. Freshly cooked meals and snacks are enjoyed by the children as they heartily tuck in to nutritious and well-balanced meals. Older children chat with the cook who is a favoured member of staff and consults with them and the staff to create warming and nourishing dishes that acknowledge many of the cultural backgrounds of the children, offering variety and introducing new tastes.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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