

The Harvey Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 23/09/2009
Inspector Tara Street

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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

The Harvey Children's Centre is operated by Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council Children's Services Department and was registered in October 2006. The centre has been operating since 2000 as a Sure Start centre. It is situated in the centre of Bolton, Lancashire. It offers a range of childcare facilities. The nursery facility offers care in designated rooms from 8.00am until 6.00pm each weekday, with the exception of bank holidays. An additional baby care facility operates in a separate unit, during term time only. Out of school care is provided from 7.45am to 9.00am and from 3.00pm until 6.00pm each weekday during term time and on a planned basis during school holiday times. Crèche facilities are provided in accordance with the programmes running in the centre. The centre opens all year round, except bank holidays. Children have access to the nursery, baby unit, the out of school or the crèche facility according to which service they are attending. Each facility contains a play area and a separate secure outdoor play area. Other areas of the centre, the community room and the family room, are used by children on a planned basis. A maximum of 126 children aged under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. The setting currently takes children from birth and also offers care to children aged eight years to 13 years.

There are currently 172 children on roll. Of these, 95 are under eight years, and of these, 39 are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Of these, 25 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Although the nursery and out of school club share a management committee, they are run independently of each other, with their own manager and staff teams. In the nursery, the manager works alongside her 18 staff; of these, 15 hold childcare qualifications at level 3 and three hold level 2 qualifications. In the out of school club the manager works alongside her five staff; of these, two hold level 3 qualifications in play work and two are currently working towards a level 2 qualification in play work. In the baby unit, both staff hold level 3 qualifications in childcare, as do both staff who regularly work in the crèche. A centre manager is employed to operate the provision as a whole. Two suitably qualified managers oversee the running of the childcare facilities. In addition the setting has a part time teacher who specialises in early years. The setting is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association and the '4Children' organisation. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and relaxed environment. They have developed close and considerate relationships with the staff who have created a very happy environment in which children can play. Staff take full account of children's abilities and interests as they plan and provide a wide range of purposeful activities.

However, there is a significant difference, between the nursery and out of school provision in the quality of children's learning and development. This is due to the out of school club not undertaking systematic observations of children's progress towards the early learning goals. Individual needs of children and parents are well considered and effective as positive attitudes and anti-discriminatory practice are fully promoted to ensure all adults and children feel included and valued. The management and staff are committed practitioners. They regularly reflect on and evaluate their practice to ensure continuous improvements in the care and education they provide for children. However, some of the records required for the safe and efficient management of the provision are not fully in place.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- implement systematic observation, assessment and planning systems for children in the out of school provision, which monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals and identify next steps in learning (Organisation). 28/10/2009

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

- ensure records of staff suitability, in the out of school provision, include the unique reference numbers of Criminal Records Bureau disclosures and the date on which they were obtained
- ensure the safeguarding children policy is in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance and procedures
- ensure opportunities for children to develop their self-reliance and independence skills are consistently provided.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Management are pro-active in ensuring staff recruitment procedures are implemented effectively, so that children are cared for by suitable, qualified adults. For example, appropriate checks are carried out and references obtained. All staff regularly attend training to ensure their knowledge and skills are kept up to date. Staff work well as a team and are fully included in the setting's self-evaluation process. This helps to ensure effective continuous improvement through the care and education they provide. However, this is less well developed within the out of school provision due to staffing difficulties. Children's safety within the setting is promoted well as a robust security system is in place. An intercom system on the main door ensures no-one can enter the building without staff knowledge and all visitors are requested to sign in and out. Most of the relevant documentation is in place with clear policies and procedures covering all aspects of the provision. As

such the needs of children are met and they are well protected. However, records of staff suitability, in the out of school provision, do not consistently include the unique reference numbers of criminal records bureau disclosures and the date on which they were obtained. Children are safeguarded, as staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and know what to do in the event of any concerns. However, the child protection policy does not fully reflect the changes to the local authority procedures from April 2006 with regard to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The environment, in both the nursery and out of school provision, is warm and welcoming to all children, parents and carers. For example, welcoming posters are situated in all areas, and in a variety of languages. The setting uses and manages its available resources effectively to meet the needs of children so they make good progress in relation to their starting points. For example, babies reach a good variety of suitable toys for themselves. Other equipment, such as interesting items in baskets, is regularly changed to sustain their interest. Toddlers and older children are well challenged by the craft and art resources available in their individual rooms and outside. Staff are effectively deployed to support individuals and groups of children. They have built good links with other settings delivering the Early Years Foundations Stage and with other early years professionals to ensure an inclusive practice is provided for all. They work closely with parents to ensure all children's individual needs are met including those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language. Parents are very involved in their children's learning as staff exchange regular information about their progress and routines. Initial information about children's likes, dislikes and interests is requested before children start attending. This gives staff a basis for planning activities that the children will enjoy. Babies and toddlers have daily diaries which record care routines and parents are able to view weekly planning because this is displayed outside each room.

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

Children are happy and settled within the setting. They seek out friends and form strong relationships with their peers and the adults caring for them and also acknowledge visitors in the setting. During activities babies, toddlers and older children learn about keeping themselves and others safe, such as learning to use play equipment safely. All staff are involved in the planning process and work closely with the children to ensure their ideas and interests are taken into consideration.

Within the nursery planning, documents cover the six areas of learning very well and ongoing observations enable staff to record children's achievements, identify their next steps in learning and plan activities which offer suitable levels of challenge. As a result children are making very good progress in their development and learning. Staff strive to involve parents and carers in their child's learning and work closely with local schools so that children are well supported to make smooth transitions. Within the out of school provision children are provided with appropriate opportunities to help them make progress across all areas of learning

and development. Staff are beginning to develop an understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and therefore children's progress towards the early learning goals is generally supported. However, this is not clearly identified within the planning and the lack of observational assessment limits the setting's ability to ensure each child's needs are being met, which is a requirement of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children in all areas readily engage in freely chosen activities and staff support them very well. For example, children enjoy working with staff to build structures from construction materials and explore how water moves when poured through a funnel or watering can. Children show a positive disposition to learn and social skills such as sharing, taking turns and sitting together at snack time develop well. Children have space to develop their own ideas and are developing their independence through tasks, such as putting on their own coats and good toileting routines. However, some opportunities for children to develop their self-reliance and independence skills during mealtime routines are not consistently provided. Children of all ages are competent in communicating through gestures, speaking and listening. Individual interests are built on as staff provide good opportunities for them to develop their creative and writing skills. Babies and young children enjoy finger painting and making marks in materials such as sand. The environment is rich in resources which enhance children's knowledge and development of number and problem solving. For example, they are able to freely access shape sorting, threading and counting games. They also enjoy number songs and rhymes which enable them to learn, experiment and practise their skills with growing confidence. Children make good use of the outdoor play area including climbing and digging activities and enjoy using the sit and ride toys.

Children are well supported in developing the skills and knowledge required to help them make sense of the wider world. For example, they make regular visits into the local community to visit farms and shops. All babies and children take part in a good range of activities both indoors and outdoors which support their physical development. They show good spatial awareness as they skilfully manoeuvre wheeled toys around the outdoor play area. Children confidently use paintbrushes and water to paint the fence and trees outside. Babies and toddlers also experience many sights, textures and sounds as they enjoy touch and feel activities and various objects in the sand and water trays. Children's health and well-being are given a high priority and are very well promoted by the setting through the sickness policy, cleaning routines, balanced menu and good access to drinks to maintain hydration. Staff talk to the children about why they need to exercise and children have a good understanding of the need to eat healthy foods to make them grow and have strong teeth. This all contributes to developing children's understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices.

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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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	2
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

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