



Barlow Moor Community Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	500011
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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School care, Crèche

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.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Barlow Moor Community Centre opened in 1990 and is run by a management committee. It is situated in the Barlow Moor area of Chorlton, Manchester. A range of childcare facilities are offered which includes a playgroup, crèche and out of school care. Children in the local community attend. The crèche operates Mondays from 12.45 to 14.45. The playgroup opens five days a week and sessions are from 09.30 to 12.00. An out of school club is available every Thursday and operates from 16.30

to 18.30. The crèche, playgroup, and out of school club are open during school term times only. During school holidays an open-access play scheme is available for a variety of sessions, operating from 09.15 to 12.45 and 13.15 to 15.45.

The children have access to 2 rooms and a large hall. Kitchen and toilet facilities are available. There is an enclosed area for outdoor play. The community centre currently has 65 children on roll who attend the range of child care facilities provided; 9 of these receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports children who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language.

The setting employs eight staff of whom four hold an early years qualification. An additional member of staff is currently working towards a Level 3 National Vocational Qualification. The group receives support from the Early Years Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's self-help skills are generally developing well. They are encouraged to become independent as they learn to wash their hands at appropriate times of the day and give out plates at snack time. Dressing skills are practised in play situations with dressing up clothes and painting aprons. Drinks are freely available which ensures that children are well hydrated. Children's health and dietary needs are met successfully as staff work well with parents to gather, record and review the relevant information. Snack times are relaxed social occasions where children and staff sit together and chat about their day. Food is served on attractive plates which makes eating a more pleasurable experience for children. Good manners are encouraged and children freely select from an exciting range of fruits which include melon, kiwi-fruit, apples, oranges and grapes.

Children stay healthy because practitioners are active in following current and appropriate health and hygiene guidelines. For example, cleaning rotas are in place and surfaces are wiped down with anti-bacterial wipes at appropriate times during the session. A sick child policy is in place and children who are ill are excluded from the setting. If a child becomes unwell they are comforted and parents are immediately contacted. Minor injuries are dealt with appropriately as a significant number of staff hold first aid certificates. However, a first aid box is not located in the rooms where the children play and those available in other areas of the community centre are not adequately stocked to meet the needs of all the children who attend. Generally, good routines are in place for changing nappies.

Children learn the importance of healthy living through topics explored. They understand that vegetables promote good health, that playing interactive games such as football is a good form of physical exercise and that their hearts beat faster after riding a bike. Pictures of Sylvester, Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny enhance the attractiveness of the outdoor play area. Children develop appropriate physical skills

and coordination as they ride on bikes, play with balls and balance on the blocks in the outdoor play area. However, the organisation of the day does not provide children with enough opportunities to engage in physical play and the climbing equipment available does not offer sufficient challenges for older and more able children. Fine motor skills are well developed as children manipulate play dough and handle small tools such as scissors and glue sticks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play and learn in a stimulating environment. Some colourful wall displays of children's independent art work, posters, friezes and murals create a purposeful learning environment. Toilet areas are designed to enable children to have privacy and rooms are heated to an appropriate temperature. A quiet area with soft cushions is available for children who simply want to relax or chill out. Toys and equipment are clean, plentiful and meet the differing needs of all the children who attend the play group and crèche. However, not all resources are accessible, limiting children's freedom of choice.

All reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Good procedures are in place for the safe collection of children and risk assessments of the premises are carried out on a daily basis. However, some issues which compromise children's safety have been identified; a large patch of ivy in the outdoor play area is accessible to the children and the entrance gate used by parents is not secure. Children are learning about fire safety and practise fire drills on a regular basis, helping them to follow defined procedures in the event of a fire or emergency evacuation.

Children are well protected because staff have completed child protection training. As a result they have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and procedures to follow. However, the child protection policy, included in the parents handbook, does not detail procedures to be applied in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young children attending the playgroup and crèche are happy and confident. They develop warm relationships with staff, which helps them feel settled and secure. Staff encourage children to say goodbye to their parents which contributes to developing trusting, secure three-way relationships. Staff interact well with the children as they play and learn.

Toddlers enjoy playing with toys which are colourful and make pleasant sounds. They are beginning to make connections as they press buttons and gaze in wonder at the sight of balls going round and round. Most young children are interested and involved in the activities provided and confidently make their own choices during free play.

Staff have recently had training on the Birth to three matters framework and are committed to implementing it to ensure the needs of the children aged 2 to 3 years who attend the play group are fully met. Young children are beginning to learn right from wrong as staff gently explain to a young child why he should not stand on a toy.

Older children who attend the after school club enjoy a broad range of activities which are planned to reflect their interests. They enjoy finding out about Mexico, discovering that it is famous for chillies and has a population of 102 million. Trips to the swimming pool allow them to have fun and socialise with other children. Children take a keen interest in sport and are currently planning a project around the World Cup.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff have a growing awareness of the Foundation Stage and early learning goals, which is reflected in the varied range of play opportunities planned and provided for the children. Planning is linked to topics with clearly identified learning outcomes for children. However, the planning of focused activities lacks detail and does not give equal coverage to all the areas of learning. As a result focused activities are not adapted to meet the needs of more or less able children and staff do not make effective use of assessment opportunities to inform future planning. Furthermore, some staff are unaware of their roles and responsibilities when carrying out these activities with the children. As part of the daily routine staff make general observations of children's progress, however there are no systems in place to assess what children already know when they start at the playgroup. Consequently, the links between planning, assessment and observations are not complete. Staff make good use of spontaneous role play situations to develop children's thinking skills. For example, children use chairs to make a car; staff extend their learning by asking them where the driver sits in the car and what they need to put on before the car sets off. Areas of continuous provision have been introduced to enable children to consolidate skills they have learned, however this is not yet fully developed to allow children to have independent access to a range of creative activities.

Children are happy and settled. More confident children speak clearly and purposefully with adults and other children as they play in the home corner and with the train set. They are secure in the routines of the play group, understanding that they sit on the carpet and read a book of their choice after snack time. Children independently select activities and are able to explain what they are doing. For example, a child explains that he has used a spanner to tighten the nuts on a model that he has made. Friendships are being formed as children play alongside one another and independently. Children enjoy listening to stories. They are able to sit for sustained periods of time and handle books correctly. There is a clearly defined writing area which allows children to practise their skills using a variety of materials, such as chalk, felt pens and coloured pencils. Child-height display boards enable children to proudly display examples of their emergent writing. However, mark making materials are not available in other play areas, limiting children's experiences of writing for a purpose. Children count in sequence from one to eight. They recognise simple shapes, such as triangles and squares, and develop problem solving skills as they build jigsaws and complete number puzzles at the maths table.

Singing songs such as "Ten in the bed" lets children develop an awareness of calculation.

Children enjoy outings in their locality. Visits to the park and nature reserve allow children to develop a positive attitude towards living creatures. Such opportunities also give children the chance to compare and contrast features of their local environment, such as looking at the similarities and differences between houses and flats. Technology is generally used well within the setting to promote children's learning. Children are developing a sense of time as they eagerly discuss with staff the last film that they saw at the pictures. Sensory opportunities allow children to explore the textures of natural materials such as sand, water and shaving foam. Children's imagination is extended as children dress up as fairies, policemen and pretend to be monsters crawling through the tunnel. A satisfactory range of creative opportunities enable children to express their ideas using a variety of media.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy each others' company and play harmoniously in the happy, relaxed atmosphere of the playgroup. Staff respond to most children's needs in an appropriate manner. Everyone is valued as an individual and the ethos of mutual respect and support between staff is reflected in the positive interaction amongst all children who attend the play group. Children have access to a varied range of resources and play opportunities which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. Children particularly enjoy finding out about Chinese New Year and celebrating St Patrick's Day. Such opportunities allow children to appreciate the diversity of the world in which they live. Children who have English as an additional language progress well due to the good level of interaction from staff. They take the time to learn words in the other languages so children who have an insecure knowledge of English feel happy and settled. Children who have special needs are welcomed into a sharing and inclusive environment. This positive approach helps foster children's spiritual, moral and social development.

Frequent praise and encouragement enables children to develop their confidence and self esteem. Children are well behaved and benefit from a calm and consistent approach that is promoted by all members of staff. All children are treated with individual care and respect. Children are developing a kind and caring attitude towards each other, demonstrated when a young child who was reluctant to wash his hands was helped by another child.

Children benefit from the friendly relationships shared between parents and staff. Parents are warmly welcomed into the playgroup both at the beginning and at the end of the session. Staff and parents chat informally at handover times discussing any issues relating to their care. A parent notice board within the playgroup keep parents informed about aspects of the provision. Some parents are involved in the day to day running of the playgroup and help out on a rota basis. The setting seeks relevant personal information from parents when they register their child to ensure that they are able to meet their needs for care. Parents are made aware of the

complaints procedure, however, systems are not in place to record complaints or concerns from parents.

The partnership with parents in receipt of funding for nursery education is satisfactory, having a positive effect on children's sense of belonging. However, parents do not receive written information about the Foundation Stage and Early Learning goals. Furthermore, procedures are not in place to provide parents with detailed information of their children's attainment within the Foundation Stage. This prevents parents from being fully involved in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Acceptable procedures are in place for the selection and vetting of staff. A good induction procedure and probationary period forms a firm basis for staff employment. Staff are qualified, consistent and work well as a team. Staffing levels are organised to ensure that children receive good levels of support throughout the day. Staff arrive early at the setting to organise the playroom to ensure that children are able to engage in play as soon as they enter the play group. Space is organised to provide children with a balanced range of activities. Children move around their immediate environment with confidence and ease. Most policies and documentation relating to the continuity of care for the children is in place and stored securely.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory and contributes to children's progress towards the early learning goals. The manager recognises her commitment to supporting staff and develop their roles within the nursery. Regular staff meetings and staff training contribute towards the professional development of staff. The manager is aware of the issues that need to be addressed and areas for further development to improve the quality of nursery education that the setting offers to children.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to address some issues regarding documentation and the activities and facilities available to the children who attend the play scheme. Significant progress has been made. Children who attend the play scheme are provided with a range of experiences which allow them to play imaginatively. A rest area is also made available for those who want to relax. Most aspects of documentation are in place, however there is a minor issue with regard to child protection which has been raised as a recommendation at this inspection.

The improvements made to date ensure that the needs of the children attending the play scheme are met and that documentation relating to the care of the children is in place and mainly up to date.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report since April 2004. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents which the provider 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

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure first aid boxes are easily accessible and stocked appropriately
- organise all resources to provide children with easy access; make the outside gate secure and ensure that the ivy in the play area outside is inaccessible to children
- continue to develop staff's awareness of the Birth to three matters framework; update the child protection policy in the parents handbook to advise them of procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and maintain a complaint log in line with recent changes to the National Standards.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review the planning and balance of focused activities, ensure all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and implement systems to assess children's knowledge when they start at the play group
- provide children with independent access to a range of creative opportunities; ensure that mark making materials are available in all areas of continuous provision to allow children to practice their writing skills
- provide parents with written information on the Foundation Stage and implement formal procedures to keep them informed of their children's progress

- organise the day to provide more opportunities to engage in physical play outdoors; provide climbing equipment which challenges older and more able children. (also applies to care)

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