

Saxon Way Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY368494

Inspection date

22/11/2010

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

Saxon Way Children's Centre is managed by a school committee. It opened in 2008 and operates from two rooms in a purpose-built building. Children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is situated in Gillingham and children come from the local area. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6pm for 50 weeks of the year.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 51 children may attend the Children's Centre and a maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 25 children aged from birth to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special needs and for whom English is an additional language.

There are seven members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate qualifications to at least National Vocational Level 3. One member of staff is currently undertaking further qualifications. The setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children and their families are welcomed to a warm and inviting nursery where staff take time to know them and embrace their differences. Staff understand that children learn through play and ensure the environment enables them to make choices and experience a wide range of activities and resources. Consequently children are happy to attend and enjoy positive interactions with each other and the adults. Children benefit from being cared for by staff who all take an active role in evaluating their setting and making improvements where appropriate, promoting continuous improvement and thereby improving outcomes.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- think about the organisation of snack and meal sessions so that children's independence is promoted at all times and that the possibility of cross contamination is limited
- consider making children's journals easily accessible to parents and carers, enabling them to add to and develop them in order to promote a shared understanding of children's individual needs and involve parents in practical ways to support their child's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery has clear policies, strategies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children. Thorough and robust risk assessments that are appropriate to the differing ages and needs of the children attending are undertaken regularly and therefore risks to them are minimised. A secure entry system protects children from visitors to the setting and staff help children to keep themselves safe. All staff are trained in food handling and hygiene procedures. The setting offers children a balanced and nutritious diet at snack and meal times and gives parents and carers advice as to what constitutes a healthy diet. However, the organisation of snack and meal times does not always promote children's independence. For example, older children do not serve their own meals. There is also the possibility of cross contamination as younger children help themselves to shared bowls of fruit and breadsticks at snack time. Sleeping children are checked on regularly and their individual sleep patterns respected. Children benefit from having their own bedding and comforters at this time too. Staff are kind and compassionate towards children, understanding that after a busy weekend they may be tired, for example.

The manager and staff are committed to further development and continuously review their practice in order that they improve outcomes for children. A variety of methods are used for evaluation and the setting values children's views and opinions too and children have access to a thinking and talking space where they are able to do this. As a result of children's opinions the group changed the set up of the nursery to better meet their needs. Staff are given responsibilities for areas of improvement and changes are reviewed to establish whether they have been beneficial to children. The staff team are highly qualified and committed to further training in order to up date their knowledge. They also participate in short courses, sharing what they have learnt with their colleagues. Recently adapted appraisals help staff to focus on improving their practice and where their strengths lie and they are a valuable tool in improving outcomes.

Furniture and equipment is of high quality and meets the needs of the differing ages of children attending. The nursery is organised into different areas of learning and children benefit from being able to access toys and resources with ease, enabling them to make choices about what they play with. Although there is a routine to the day, staff are flexible and arrange resources to reflect children's interests. Children participate in a range of adult and child led activities and are fully supported by skilled staff who know when to interact with children and when to stand back and let children lead their own play. Toys and resources are used effectively to help children participate in a broad range of experiences and staff help children to expand on them. For example, children are enjoying using a range of construction toys to make identifiable trains and an adult asks whether they would like her to bring train tickets in tomorrow to enhance their play and the children are very keen on this. Staff acknowledge children's differences positively, knowing the children that they care for very well. Parents and carers are invited to the setting to share the different foods that they eat as families and children made

and tasted pepper soup. When children speak English as an additional language staff take time to learn key words to help support them. Children with additional needs are supported by the staff who work closely with parents and other agencies to offer appropriate care and as a consequence children are making good progress which is celebrated with parents. The group also works closely with settings that children leave them to attend, sharing helpful information to help them care for the children and they have a close relationship with the school where they are based. Easy access to on-site professionals such as speech therapists benefits children's development. Parents and carers are welcomed warmly into the setting. New parents spend time with their child's key person sharing important information that helps the nursery to offer individual care to children. Parents and carers have access to a wealth of information about young children and there is much support available to them. Policies and procedures are thorough and reviewed to ensure that they are relevant. Information is exchanged verbally each day and this helps staff to understand each child's needs on each day. Parents and carers may ask to look at their children's journals whenever they wish but they are not easily accessible to them meaning that not all look at them regularly and miss the opportunity to add their own input to them. Parents and carers are invited to six monthly meetings with their child's key person, at their convenience, and look at the journals then, discussing their child's progress and needs. Overall parents and carers are very happy with the care that their children receive and write letters to that effect.

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

Children understand their own physical needs. For example they take themselves to cushions when they are tired and willingly go to the bedroom with staff, appreciating the cuddles offered, and ask for windows to be closed when they are feeling chilly. They are independent users of the toilets, knowing that they wash their hands before eating and after messy play, for example. Children are encouraged to help themselves to tissues and blow their own noses, discarding of the tissues appropriately. During warmer months children have free access to the outdoor play area where they participate in a range of activities that promote development across all areas. However, during colder months outside play is limited to specific times and not accessed in inclement weather as not all children bring appropriate clothing to nursery, meaning that there are limited opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills at these times. Staff do think of activities to help children indoors such as making large shapes with pencils in time to music. Snack and lunch times are sociable occasions and children enjoy a range of homemade healthy meals and snacks. Children feel safe and secure at the nursery, supported by caring staff who they feel able to confide in and express how they are feeling. They are introduced to visitors so that they are aware of why people are there, helping them to feel secure, and are given reminders about keeping themselves safe such as not sitting on tables. Children understand that they do not run indoors and the reasons why.

Children have formed strong relationships with their peers and greet each other

warmly when they arrive. They enjoy positive interactions with each other and willingly share and take turns. When children are heavily involved in activities they invite others to join them so that they are able to enjoy them too. Children bring toys from home and happily share them with others. Children's artwork is displayed and there is an area for children to place constructions, making them feel that what they have created is valued. Children show pride in their achievements and share their pleasure with others. Children enjoy looking at photographs of themselves, revisiting past activities and friends that have now left. Children's birthdays are celebrated. Children are kind towards one another. For example, they help each other to put on aprons before painting and fetch children's bags when they are going home.

Children learn through play. They make choices about what they play with and are active and creative learners. Children have favourite stories and enjoy looking at books with adults, using props to support the telling of them. There are many opportunities for children to practise their pre-writing skills and they use a range of tools to make models out of clay, for example. Children see the written word throughout the nursery and numbers are displayed prominently. Children practise their counting skills and number recognition when playing with telephones, for example and use construction toys to make measuring sticks and discuss how tall each other is and the length of things. Children are learning about foods from different countries and enjoy cooking and tasting them. They plant seeds and nurture them, eating the products at the end. Children enjoy playing with and experiencing a large range of natural resources and parents have introduced Heuristic play at home as a result of this. Children use their imaginations to great effect when participating in role play. They enjoy acting out experiences and taking on different roles. They have access to real and pretend resources to support them and everyone participates, staff and children, acting out various roles. Children make good use of props to support their play, making trains out of construction toys and adapting cardboard boxes, for example. There are many opportunities for children to explore a range of sensory experiences and make music with a vast and differing range of musical instruments. Children are developing skills for the future. They are reminded to wash their hands under one tap at a time in order to save water, for example, and hang their own coats on hooks. They have occasional use of computers and a large white board and enjoy playing, listening to and responding to music on compact disc players. Children understand the concept of night and day, demonstrating this in their role play. Staff make written and photographic observations and use these to assess children's stages of development and where they need further support. They also use them to identify children's interests as they appreciate that children learn more when playing with toys and resources that they enjoy. Staff plan activities that add to children's enjoyment and will promote learning. These are assessed and children are making good progress through the developmental stepping stones.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

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