

Ellesmere Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	300751
Inspection date	18/05/2011
Inspector	Angela Howard
Setting address	4 Maxwell Street, Sheffield, S4 7JN
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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

Ellesmere Children's Centre is a Community nursery which opened in 1996. The centre has charitable status and is managed by a committee of volunteers who have personal or professional links with the local community. It operates from an old Victorian school building in Brungreave on the outskirts of Sheffield. All the children are cared for on the ground floor of the building. The children have access to fully secure outdoor play areas, of which one is a sensory garden. The setting serves families from the immediate community and the surrounding areas of Sheffield. The nursery is open from 8am until 6pm each weekday, 52 weeks of the year, excluding bank holidays. The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 50 children aged from six months to five years, of which no more than nine may be under two years at any one time. There are currently 75 children on roll, of whom 27 access nursery education funding. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. There is provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those children who speak English as an additional language. There are 13 staff, of whom nine work directly with children full or part time. All staff hold an appropriate early years qualification to level 3 or above. The nursery is supported by Early Years Foundation consultants from the local authority. The centre has been awarded Pathways to Quality by the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are at the heart of all that happens at the setting. An extremely positive, inclusive approach ensures that the learning environment and resources provide imaginative challenge to stretch each child's learning, play and exploration. Parents and carers are delighted with the provision made for their children. The management of the setting are forward thinking and are rigorous in their approach to self-evaluation of the setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review and extend the ways in which committee members, staff, children and parents are involved in reflecting on practice and identifying areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Robust safeguarding procedures excel requirements. Staff demonstrate an excellent awareness of child protection, with extremely strong systems for dealing with concerns. The rigorous procedures

in place for the recruitment of staff ensure that all adults working with the children are suitable to do so. Staff induction is particularly thorough so that all adults understand their responsibilities in keeping the children safe. The rigorous monitoring of visitors to the setting further ensure risks to children are minimised. Policies and procedures are highly effective and extensive daily assessment of potential risk allows children to discover and learn safely. Security systems are rigorous and closed-circuit television further promotes this. The environment is very conducive to learning and is well maintained. The sensory garden is an excellent resource that is used extremely well by children and staff on a daily basis. There is a powerful inclusive ethos and outstanding commitment to the uniqueness of each child. They are nurtured, respected and discrimination is never accepted. Staff value each families' linguistic and cultural diversity and very effectively promote children's developing awareness and understanding of people's differences and similarities. Rich, varied and innovative displays show children and practitioners at the setting engaged in activities. These help children feel special, confident, proud and promote a sense of achievement and belonging. Displays include photographs of significant times in children's lives and include different texts, signs, labels and numbers in many languages. Diversity is actively celebrated and used as strength to enrich the learning environment. Children with very specific needs are able to fully participate because of the specialist knowledge and skills that staff have to enable them to meet the needs of children who may be excluded from other provision. Children's cultural identity and home language are highly valued and reflected in the setting and this extends to the employment of bilingual staff.

Partnership with parents is superb as staff discuss every aspect of their child's learning and development with them. Exchange of information is clearly two-way and ongoing. As a result, parents feel they do have a voice and play a vital role in their children's care and development, and that their views are important. The setting keeps parents informed for example, through daily conversations, notices, newsletters, questionnaires, children's journals and meetings. As a result, highly effective partnerships are in place with parents. They clearly appreciate the staff as comments in the customer satisfaction survey say the staff are brilliant and conclude that the main reason parents use the centre is the staff. There are very strong links with outside agencies and health professionals and transitions into schools are well managed to ensure that children confidently progress onto the next stage in their learning journey. The staff team is very keen to continue with their ongoing professional development and in-house training is used effectively to enhance the quality of children's care and learning. Although management appraise staff practice and continually assess the children's progress and achievements, the systems for including all stakeholders in self-evaluating the setting are not yet fully embedded.

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

Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of each child's welfare and learning needs and know their family well. They value children as unique individuals and use this information well to assess starting points, plan activities

and record progress for each child. Young children and babies demonstrate good levels of engagement and enjoyment as they take part in a wide variety of learning experiences. There is a strong focus on activities that promote investigation, exploration and experimentation, with children using all of their senses. For example, children enjoy exploring textures as they feel items such as leaves and plants in the sensory garden. The heuristic play throughout the setting, with a selection of both natural and man-made household items, encourages children to discover and investigate. Children take the lead in their own learning and are supported and challenged very well to build upon what they already know. This is achieved by children being encouraged to make choices, to pursue their own interests and to enjoy expressing themselves creatively. They respond very positively to what they see, smell, feel and hear. Children describe the leaves on the bushes in the sensory garden accurately. They describe the smell of lavender 'like wash powder' and talk confidently about the sky and how it is changing as the dark clouds come and forecast that the rain will come. Children play a very vivid imaginary game with umbrellas and explain how they have to run away from the rain. They sing songs from memory and sing with gusto on the karaoke machine on the stage outdoors, oblivious to any one else being there. They talk with confidence about their intentions, for example, 'I am going on a bear hunt and I am not scared' as they climb on the small walls and say 'the pebbles are scrunching under my feet'. Babies and toddlers attempt to communicate in a range of ways through repeating words and using gestures. There are lots of free-flow conversations and children repeat words such as 'book', and talk about the animals they can see in the book. They show a love of books as they turn pages, studying the pages, telling the staff that teddy is going to the park and repeating the words, describing the items in the teddies basket. Older children at circle time talk about the weather, how the sun is out and that it is quite windy. Some of the children talk about not liking the rain and how they like to use umbrellas. Children talk very confidently about past and present and future activities accurately. They retell when they went out in the rain, how today it is looking dark outdoors and when they go to the sea life centre tomorrow it may rain but they will be indoors. Children love to share home events and talk to their peers and staff about how they are learning Arabic and that they have been looking at a book at home about planets, naming some of them. There is great emphasis on building children's self-esteem and a good disposition and attitude towards learning. All children develop a strong sense of worth through the good interaction, care and attention they receive from the staff. For example, children respond eagerly to constant praise and encouragement and enjoy the warm, caring reassurance from the staff. They feel good about themselves, show respect for each other and are beginning to manage their own behaviour successfully.

Children learn about their own safety through following the excellent practice of the staff. They gently remind children of safety rules to reinforce safe practice and explain boundaries to help children understand why rules exist. This gives them utmost confidence to explore and learn in a safe and secure, yet challenging, environment. Children develop an excellent awareness of healthy practices through signs, posters, topics, role-play areas and excellent hygiene routines, modelled and encouraged by the staff. Snacks are made from fresh and nutritious ingredients and individual dietary requirements are strictly adhered to. Children easily access labelled bottles of water and older children brush their teeth after meals.

Prominently displayed healthy lunch box information and photographs of activities children have taken part in that promote a healthy lifestyle, further help children to understand how to keep themselves healthy from a very young age. Therefore, children are extremely content and settled because their individual health, physical and dietary needs are met to an exceptional standard.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

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