

# Southampton University Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspection date</b>	17/01/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Lorraine Sparey
<b>Setting address</b>	Building 41, University Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO17 1BJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	023 8059 3465
<b>Email</b>	nursery@soton.ac.uk
<b>Type of setting</b>	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*.

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## Description of the setting

Southampton Early Years Centre is owned by The University of Southampton. It opened in 1976 and operates from a building in the Highfield area of Southampton. It provides a service for staff, students and the local community. The centre is open each weekday from 8am to 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting is registered on the early years register. A maximum of 108 children may attend the centre at any one time. There are currently 151 children from four months to five years on roll. Of these, 45 children receive funding for early education for three and four-year-olds. Children come from a wide catchment area and are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The centre employs 39 full and part time members of staff. All of these hold appropriate early years qualifications, four of whom are qualified to NVQ level 4. There is one member of staff who has Early Years Professional Status.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are eager to come into the setting, quickly engaging in a variety of activities. Staff know the individual children's needs, working closely with parents ensuring that these are met. There is a balance of adult led and child initiated play and learning opportunities. Individual 'Path to plan' records enable staff to effectively plan ensuring that children are making good progress in all areas of their learning and development. Overall, staff are deployed well to support children's learning and welfare needs. The staff and management are all involved in reviewing their practice ensuring that their commitment to continually improving is successful.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve children's understanding of the expectations and boundaries within the setting by ensuring that all staff are consistent in their approach
- review staffing arrangements to ensure that all children are supported appropriately.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are effectively safeguarded because staff and management working with them have good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of safeguarding. All staff attend training on a regular basis to keep their knowledge updated. Staff are able to describe possible signs and symptoms of child abuse and effective procedures to follow in the event of a concern. Risk assessments and daily safety checks ensure that the environment is safe and well maintained. Keypad entry systems mean that no unauthorised persons may enter the setting. Rigorous and robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that only suitable adults work with the children. Ongoing appraisals and review systems ensure that staff knowledge and understanding of childcare practices are up-to-date. Regular training opportunities are provided to support staff development.

There are several systems to ensure the provision is effectively monitored and evaluated. The management team complete observations and cover staff at different times during the day such as nappy changing or meal times. This means they have a clear picture of the centre's practice. All management and staff are encouraged to be involved in completing the Ofsted self-evaluation reviewing the whole of the provision. Regular parent questionnaires and discussion with children enables them to be fully involved in the monitoring systems. Comments from parents suggesting areas to improve have been successfully addressed. For example, previously parents were concerned that the baby room space was limited for the children. As a result they have moved into a larger room with a separate sleep room. In addition regular visits from the early years provide opportunities to review and share good practice. There are clear plans in place to improve the outdoor area demonstrating their commitment to providing good quality care and education.

Generally resources are deployed effectively to meet the needs of the children attending. However, on occasions although staff ratios are met the children are not fully supported. For example, at times staff are busy changing nappies or supporting children going to sleep. As a result other children become unsettled. There is a broad range of resources throughout the centre which are well maintained ensuring they are suitable for the children. The majority of resources are easily accessible enabling children to freely choose their own play and learning opportunities. There are variety of good resources to support children's awareness of diversity such as musical instruments, dolls, books, and posters. The centre environment is welcoming, bright colourful posters, examples of the children's own work and photographs are displayed throughout encouraging children's sense of belonging.

Staff foster good relationships with parents and there are various methods of communication, ensuring they are kept well informed of their child's progress. Regular newsletters, e-mails, informal discussions and opportunities to be involved in their child's individual planning. Parents are encouraged to contribute their skills or come into the setting to share their cultures and celebrations. For example, a parent visits and shares 'sufganiyot' doughnuts with the children whilst explaining

about the Jewish festival of Hanukah. Parents report that they particularly like the activities that the children participate in. They talk with their child's key person regularly feeling that communication is generally good acknowledging that when their child changes rooms it takes time to develop relationships with the new key persons. There are systems in place to share information with other early years professionals and settings. Consequently their shared approach to children's welfare and learning needs is successful.

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

Children come into the setting confidently, quickly engaging in a variety of activities. They are keen to seek out their friends and are developing good relationships with their peers and the adults. Babies enjoy exploring cereals putting them in different containers and eating them. A member of staff supports them continually talking to them asking 'What does it feel like', 'Can you hear the different sounds'. Staff respond with different materials such as metal spoons and bowls. The babies enjoy making different sounds, giggling and smiling. All children throughout the setting enjoy singing songs and joining in with the actions. Younger children's emotional needs are generally well met. Staff offer lots of cuddles and reassurance including sleep times when staff sit with the children. Staff use information gathered from the 'Path to plan' sheets and their observations to effectively plan the next steps in children's development. For example, a toddler shows interest in looking in the mirror and recognising themselves. Staff extend this by providing an activity where children are given a face with various features which they can stick on in the appropriate places. New language such as 'eyebrows' is introduced and repeated. At other times with older children staff work closely with their key children enabling them to focus on the children's individual needs. For example, a small group of children make various shapes such as a square, triangle and circle. They colour them in and are then encouraged to find the shapes within the environment. A child shows a sense of achievement as they quickly find some construction pieces in the shape of triangles. Another child points to the wheel of the train saying 'These are circles'. Children have good opportunities to role-play using their imagination in the well-resourced rooms. The role play area is changed on a regular basis depending on the children's interests. For example, a doctor's surgery and Santa's grotto. Children's independence is promoted both in their personal care, enabling them to use the toilets independently, and encouraging them to make their own choices. Several children enjoy drawing. A child notices one of the crayons needs sharpening so they go and find the sharpeners. They are focused as they go through all the crayons making sure they are ready for others to use. Children show good levels of confidence inviting a visiting adult to join in their play and engaging them in conversations. A three-year-old tells the adult that the castle makes a noise. They demonstrate how to move the flag to make the sound. The child goes on to say they can run out of batteries, but you have to press hard. Children throughout the setting enjoy listening to stories and staff encourage them to be involved either by asking questions about what comes next in the story

or by talking to them about the pictures. Younger children looking at textured books. Consequently, children are effectively developing skills for the future.

Children followed good hygiene routines. Their independence is well supported and positive posters about hand washing, blowing noses and covering coughs promote children's awareness. All children are encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating. Generally children are confident to find a tissue below their own noses, disposing of the tissues appropriately. Children are encouraged to learn about safety through discussion and following the simple rules. They practice the evacuation procedures to ensure they are familiar with what to do in an emergency. Older children remind younger children not to run in the play rooms. Staff are positive role models demonstrating how to use the stairs with care. In addition, signs promoting safe use are displayed at children's level. Generally children's behaviour is appropriate to their age and stage of development. However, at times children's play becomes boisterous or they find it difficult to take turns and staff are not consistent in their approach to managing their behaviour. This results in some children becoming distressed. Children have good opportunities to learn about their community and the wider world. Children with additional needs are well supported within the setting and staff work closely with parents to ensure they are able to reach their full potential. Children with English as an additional language are effectively supported. Dual language print and key words in the child's home language enables children to feel secure while developing their English.

## 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

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

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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