

South Acton Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY296597
Inspection date	25/05/2011
Inspector	Martha Darkwah
Setting address	Castle Close, Acton, London, W3 8RX
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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

South Acton Children's Centre opened in 2005. The centre is part of the inclusive educational provision of the London Borough of Ealing. The centre comprises a nursery, which is open each weekday for 51 weeks of the year from 8am to 6pm, a maintained element providing care and education and a family and community team providing extensive family support.

The maintained education element was not inspected as part of this inspection. All services are housed in a purpose-built building with outdoor play areas for the children. The centre is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 54 children may attend the day care provision at any one time, additionally; a maximum of 40 children may attend the out of school provision.

There are currently 60 children aged six months to five years on roll. The three and four-year-old children attending are in receipt of government funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider community. The centre currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The centre also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

An overall head of centre is supported by a senior management team which includes the manager, and deputy manager. The centre employs 32 staff; all are qualified and hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children are busy and happy in this very well organised centre. Their individual progress is consistently very good and often excellent in relation to their capabilities and starting points. The centre has established very effective partnerships with specialist advisors, parents and carers and their involvement is warmly welcomed and highly valued in the ongoing welfare of all children. The head of centre involves the whole staff team, the children and their parents; using a range of methods in evaluating the centre's provision leading to improvement in almost every area. She is enthusiastic and proactive in her search for new ideas to refresh and update and improve the provision, showing exceptional capacity to maintain continuous improvement. Although effective, the self-evaluation system is yet to reflect and consolidate all aspects of practice.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing the culture of reflective practice within the self-evaluation and ongoing informed discussion to maintain the quality of provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Outstanding attention is given to safeguarding children. Staff recruitment and induction procedures are very robust; references are sought and interrogated, and criminal record checks are initiated immediately before appointment. A recent initiative has led to the staff agreeing to lock up their mobile phones during their hours of work. New staff are provided with high levels of support to ensure they understand, and implement, the centre's regulatory and operational policies and procedures. Risk assessments systems are particularly thorough, including those for outings.

Scrupulous monitoring of accident and injury records contributes to children's safety and effective risk assessments help to keep them safe in the nursery centre and on outings. The setting maintains comprehensive and orderly records and documents which meet requirements and help to promote children's safety and the smooth running of the nursery centre.

The staff team are dedicated to maintaining high standards of care and education. They enjoy their work and demonstrate high levels of motivation. Evaluations of the centre take into account any observations made by professional partners and recommendations made at the previous inspection have been met. Although working well, the self-evaluation system does not yet reflect and consolidate all aspects of practice. The team share their strong desire to secure their own professional development and their drive for continuous improvement is tireless. She involves the nursery in exciting pilot schemes with the local authority and she invites expert speakers to talk to the adults who enrich the knowledge of staff and parents alike. The centre's capacity for continuous improvement is outstanding.

Partnerships with parents and external agencies, for example speech and occupational therapists, are outstanding. Their collaborative and communicative approach ensures that children receive high levels of consistent ongoing learning support. Parents are provided with exceptionally good levels of information about all aspects of the care and education. They are fully involved in centre and supporting children's next steps for learning. A range of communication systems, such as home link books, newsletters, and learning plans, keeps them up to date. Staff members invite parents to come along to Saturday workshops to share their ideas and the value of outdoor play giving them pointers on how children learn and the value of outdoor play.

Partnerships with others benefit the children, for example, the centre's involvement

in Every Child a Talker. The staff team works closely with the local authority support workers to continually improve the provision for children's care and learning.

A fully inclusive and welcoming service is provided to support all children in a rich and enabling learning environment. This includes effective use of Makaton signing, labelling indoors and outdoors, information literature in a number of community languages, which support children's understanding of the local community and wider world. Children are encouraged to develop a good sense of community because all staff have a genuine caring approach and help children celebrate their differences and similarities to ensure they feel valued and develop a self-esteem and confidence. The staff team are multilingual and they too share their knowledge of different cultural events and languages to enrich the provision for children.

Resources are readily accessible and available for all the children to experience and include a wide selection of resources that promote positive images of diversity, disability and linguistic differences. The team are very well informed about ways to support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They share any concerns with parents and, with their permission, seek assistance from specialist practitioners. Their hard work ensures that all children receive the individual support that they need to enable them to achieve their potential.

Formal and informal meetings and written reports ensure that parents are well informed about their children's ongoing progress. They also have access to their children's folders of observations and records at any time. Useful information is posted in the entrance area for parents. They can easily see which staff members hold positions of responsibility, their qualifications, and the name of the key person for their child as well as information about day-to-day events.

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

Children are exceptionally well supported, are extremely happy and emotionally secure. The childcare and educational provisions are excellent and children make exceptional progress given their individual starting points. Children learn about fire safety through regular evacuation practice and as they are supported in their small world play by staff. They learn to use tools such as scissors and gardening tools safely. Children are kind and considerate towards each other.

All children have excellent access to literacy. The youngest make marks with their fingers in cornflour, sand and other medium for mark-making. Staff members consistently engage children in highly worthwhile and stimulating conversations and they are becoming confident communicators. Children love stories and enjoy looking at books, knowing text has meaning. Many of the children are beginning to make the connection between the sounds and the shapes of letters of the alphabet. All children are gaining confidence and good social skills. They learn to share and take turns with favourite toys and equipment.

Staff members observe the children in all groups carefully and make excellent use of their notes to plan next steps for each child. Staff members use photographs to record special moments to share with parents. Children in all groups make choices and decisions in their play and freely choose from the wide selection of good quality toys at their disposal. They benefit from being in a small group with sensitive, caring staff who make their introduction to the centre a pleasant and happy experience.

Although the provision for young children to experiment with programmable and mechanical toys in exploration and experimentation is not prominent enough within the educational programme, this is currently an area undergoing further development. Taken overall, activities promote the development of literacy and numeracy skills thereby contributing effectively to children's future economic well-being.

Children thoroughly enjoy whole group activities in their base rooms, such as circle time where they enjoy listening to stories. The stories are skilfully led by staff members that ensure that all children are fully included. Young toddlers engage in delightful non-verbal communication, for example, as they discover cause and effect through the pressing of push buttons on play equipment. Children learn about numbers, counting, size, length and shape through carefully planned play indoors and outdoors.

Planning provides excellent opportunities for children to experiment using all their senses. Staff members ask open-ended questions to encourage the children to think beyond the obvious and they nurture language development by modelling clear speech and by introducing new words.

Children's health needs are met due to the outstanding practices within the centre. They are involved in a comprehensive range of purposeful activities to promote a healthy lifestyle. Freshly prepared healthy and nutritious meals are provided for children according to their individual dietary needs. Detailed health and dietary information is obtained from parents which enables staff to offer the appropriate level of care. In the main, best hygiene practice is consistently implemented in the centre to maintain children's safety and good health.

Children have free flow and use the garden daily in the fresh air offering plenty of opportunities for exercise. They take part in energetic games and they make good use of climbing and balancing apparatus in the delightful garden and outdoor play area.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
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	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
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	1

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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