

Bidston & St. James Children's Centre-Miriam Place Nursery

St. James Centre, 344 Laird Street, BIRKENHEAD, Merseyside, CH41 7AL

Inspection date	12/07/2013
Previous inspection date	12/12/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- The nursery provides an inspiring, welcoming and stimulating environment. The enthusiastic and caring staff team ensure that excellent relationships with key persons are well established. This means that children are exceptionally well supported and demonstrate a very strong sense of security and increasing independence.
- Highly effective, exemplary strategies are in place to help children develop early language and communication skills and to support their physical, personal, social and emotional development. As a result, all children make extremely good progress from their starting points.
- The ethos of the nursery is evident in all areas both inside, and outdoors. As a result, children attending have a strong awareness of their own self-worth and belonging.
- Robust management systems are in place based on focussed, in-depth evaluation of staff practice. A well-targeted programme of professional development means that staff are constantly seeking to improve their already excellent understanding of how children learn and how to meet their individual needs.
- Children's behaviour is exceptional because staff are exemplary role models. This ensures that children are well motivated, eager to join in all activities and clearly demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning.
- Strong, respectful partnerships with parents and other professionals means that children's individual needs are exceptionally well met.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector checked all relevant documentation and scrutinised requested policies and procedures including those for safeguarding and special educational needs provision.
- The inspector looked at children's records, learning journals and observation, assessment and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of staffs' suitability to work with children, the provider's self-evaluation form and the development and action plans in place to secure improvement.
- The inspector spoke with the acting manager, nominated person, individual staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection and carried out joint observations with the acting manager.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents and carers and other professionals spoken to on the day, and from written comments.

Inspector

Dorothy Williams

Full Report

Information about the setting

Bidston and St. James Children's Centre-Miriam Place Nursery was registered in 2004 on the Early Years Register. It is situated within a children's centre in the Birkenhead area of Wirral and is managed by the local council. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children.

It operates from seven rooms within the children centre and there is a large area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 18 members of child care staff. All of these hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above, including three with Early Years Professional Status.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 63 children attending all of whom are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The nursery is supported by the children's centre foundation stage consultant.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- continue to maintain the current exemplary practice when the management structure changes so that, children have consistency of care and continue to make excellent progress towards their next stage of education.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The nursery is housed in a purpose-built children's centre and is planned entirely around the needs of the children and families who attend. It is inspiring, flexible and creative. The rooms are calm and inviting with an exceptional range of interesting, attractive and accessible resources and activities.

Children are exceptionally well supported in their learning and development because the staff know them and their families very well. Staff have an in-depth knowledge and

understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They take time to assess their key children's needs, explore their interests and plan appropriate activities for their development. Staff work very closely with parents and other professionals and regularly share what they know about children's learning in nursery and at home. Parents readily contribute to their child's learning journey records and support their interests, for instance, by bringing in family photographs and contributing to family books. Children readily extend their interests through a variety of well planned activities, such as investigating bugs, caterpillars and butterflies. Themes run throughout the nursery, babies sing about bugs and play with oversized insects. Toddlers investigate using magnifying glasses and bug boxes and older children create caterpillar and butterfly friendly garden areas. They find, count and explore bugs, they watch as caterpillars make cocoons in their bug house and free the adult butterflies when they emerge.

Staff give high priority to children's early language development through strategies, such as 'Every Child a Talker' and 'Talk to your Baby'. They skilfully introduce new vocabulary, sing rhymes and use puppets to re-tell familiar stories. Hot spots for communication both indoors and outside are identified and resourced so that children's language is extended and their vocabulary increased. For instance, wigwams with a range of books, photographs and cushions are provided in each room. Children sit inside they talk to each other exchange ideas and share jokes. As a result, of these experiences children are able to make choices, work together and become independent learners.

Babies have many opportunities to develop early skills, such as pointing and reaching when choosing their activities. They roll, crawl and explore a variety of natural materials, such as ice cubes, pine cones, raffia and wool. This multi-sensory approach to learning ensures that children develop interests based on exploration and imagination. Toddlers seek out treasure baskets to share and explore. They complete inset jigsaws and make displays about keeping cool in the sun. Older children are keen to share their activities as they talk about their favourite books and extend their imagination using small world activities. Staff ask open-ended questions, such as 'What do you think will happen if ..?' or 'How do you think we can make a home for the bugs?' This enables children to think critically and solve problems.

Children explore colour, shape and number in play activities, such as parachute games and board games with their key person. They expertly use advanced technology, such as smart board and computer to find colours, shapes, complete number puzzles and are given support to write simple sentences. In this way they extend their knowledge and understanding of their world.

Children's physical development is very well supported through indoor and outdoor play. The innovative and inspiring design of the outdoor area encourages children to extend their play using larger equipment and resources. For instance, mark making using large paint brushes and water, chunky chalks, see-saw and water features. They have space to run and play parachute and team games together. Children explore the natural world through a well thought out and planted nature garden that attracts butterflies, has planters for fruit and vegetables and a seating area for picnics. The sensory garden enables children to touch, smell and taste herbs and scented plants which are used in baking and cookery, such as lavender biscuits. In this way children learn to investigate

and respect their environment.

Children have exemplary learning journals, which record their individual progress and development. These are regularly monitored by the management team to ensure accuracy of recording. Staff make excellent observations of children as they play and learn. They note the characteristics of learning, depth of involvement and follow children's interests in detail. Accurate planning, assessment and an innovative tracking system enable staff to ensure that all children are making very good progress in their learning and development. Activities are differentiated to suit the needs of all children within the age range. Visual timetables, dual language words and symbols enable all children to communicate their needs and access all areas of the nursery. As a result, children thoroughly enjoy their time at nursery. They develop high self-esteem and make excellent progress within the highly stimulating environment.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The ethos of the nursery is that the child is at the heart of everything that happens on a daily basis. Children are respected and treated equally and the voice of the child is evident throughout. On registration parents complete an 'All about me' booklet with their child. This gives a very clear picture of their child's early development and of their family. Staff record the information and use it to assess the child's starting point, to support settling in and inform early learning. This includes information about children's sleep routines and feeding for babies and young children and medication for those with health needs, professionals involved with the child or family and any supporting documentation. During a settling-in period the key person spends a good deal of time getting to know each child. This means that children develop strong emotional bonds with their key person and are highly motivated and keen to learn.

Children recognise and manage their own personal hygiene needs extremely well throughout the day. Older children use the bathroom independently, they wash their hands at key times, use tissues to blow their noses and dispose of them in the bins provided. They are highly independent as they take off coats and hang them on the correct peg, when entering nursery. Younger children are very well supported in their toileting, nappy changing routines are highly effective in ensuring children's dignity is maintained. Babies sleep comfortably in cots with their own blankets and comforters, while older children seek quiet comfortable places for rest and relaxation. When babies are sleeping a photograph and chart is attached to each cot detailing time of sleep when checked, by whom and any specific requirements. The sleep room is very calm, cool and has a comfortable area for parents who wish to continue breastfeeding. Communication and language tips are displayed and sleeping babies are very well monitored. Room rotas ensure a very high standard of cleanliness is maintained at all times.

Children engage in a huge variety of physical activities both indoors and outside. They engage in music and movement sessions and respond well to yoga, exploring relaxation and physical exercise with interest and enthusiasm. Simple ball games and interactive music sessions enable younger children to develop their physical skills. The children's

physical development is further enhanced by visits to the local park to use the larger play equipment and play area for extended activities. Through a variety of activities, such as baby gym with varying levels and changing textures, babies and toddlers are supported to roll, crawl and develop their reaching, stretching and early walking skills.

Children fully understand about healthy eating and making choices. They plant seeds in the outdoor area and discuss the growth of the plants. They look forward to eating their own produce. Meals are provided by the children centre cafe. The chef and her assistants discuss menus with staff, parents and children. They prepare an excellent range of healthy nutritious meals and encourage children by engaging them in meal preparation. For instance, children help to collect vegetables from the centre allotment; they wash, peel and chop them with support, before sampling them in their daily meal. In this way children are supported to try new and varied tastes and make healthy choices when eating. Menus are seasonal, they are shared with parents and displayed in the foyer. Parents are invited to sample the meals in the cafe and make comment or suggest options. Older children eat in a dining room. They select their own plate or bowl and cutlery. They self-serve their meal of pasta and vegetables from large serving bowls and pour their own water. They scrape plates and stack them on a child-height trolley ready for collection and then select fruit or banana and prune fool for pudding. Younger children are very well supported to use a spoon and fork and babies are appropriately fed milk or weaning foods as needed. The milk kitchen has an innovative system to inform staff of the precise time a kettle has been boiled or formula milk opened and when babies have been fed or bottles given. In this way children's nutritional needs are very well met. Snacks are provided throughout the day. These include fresh fruit, raw vegetable sticks, milk and water. Fresh cool water is readily available in children's own labelled cups or bottles. Children readily talk about healthy eating what food is 'yummy' and good for us. Well informed displays enable children to recognise healthy food and drink and make informed choices. Classes for parents support their understanding of nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

Children's behaviour is exemplary as the staff are very effective role models. The nursery has a calm and inviting atmosphere where all children and their families are respected and loved. Children who have special educational needs and /or disabilities have their needs exceptionally well met as staff support them through a variety of individual plans and behaviour strategies. These are shared with parents, children and other professionals. Staff speak quietly, use good manners and always use correct language. They remind children to say please and thank you and use positive language to address behaviour. For example, they encourage turn taking by saying 'let's see who has not had a turn yet', or 'give someone else a turn now please', when playing parachute games. Children readily share magnifying glasses when looking at bugs, and say sorry if they bump into each other while playing. When on the see-saw children choose who will be next and partners are frequently changed. When playing board games children choose their partner and decide who will go next to put down their counters. They cheer each other on when playing and say 'well done' to the winner.

Children have an excellent understanding of how to manage risks and challenges relative to their age. Older children learn to use scissors correctly, they assess the risk of 'going on a Bear Hunt to the dark den' or making a high tower with large blocks. Younger children climb through tunnels and use water play effectively in the outdoor area. They tell each

other to be careful when pushing prams or running under the parachute. Children feel very safe within the nursery as they are well supported by their key persons. They form very strong attachments and are encouraged to share their feelings and thoughts with each other and with staff. Children are comfortable using 'How are you feeling today' boards and sharing their stories through imaginative and puppet play. This means that children's emotional and physical needs are exceptionally well met and their well-being is paramount within the nursery. Transitions within the nursery and to other settings are exemplary. Time is taken to visit settings, such as schools and other nurseries. To meet new staff and children, explore new environments and join in sessions. Family visits are encouraged and siblings welcomed. Transition documents are thorough and information is sensitively shared. The setting's practice consistently reflects the highest aspirations for all children and staff. Consequently, children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points and are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their learning and development.

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

The leadership team are inspirational in their practice and are rightly proud of their achievements, such as the Inclusion Charter, Investors in People, Health Promotion, Every Child a Talker and Leap into Literacy. They work together to lead practice and provide the very best for the children who attend the nursery, and their families. They have very high expectations and invite others to share this outstanding practice on a regular basis. Room evaluation and action plans show continual reflection of staff practice and activities undertaken. The nursery works closely with the local authority and the children's centre. They are an exemplar nursery within the area. All required policies and procedures are extremely well written and embedded in practice. Staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding however, there was a recent failure to inform Ofsted of a notification within required timescales. The provider has since updated their procedures and now has solid understanding of when to notify Ofsted. Strict cleaning routines and robust daily risk assessments are in place for all areas of the nursery and all activities. Risk assessments for outings and visits are undertaken before and during each outing and any issues, such as roadworks or closures are noted.

Recruitment procedures are rigorous. An extensive induction programme includes management and peer observations and self-reflection. Staff training and development profiles ensure that all staff reach the high standard of expertise and care expected at the nursery. Staff morale is exceptionally high, they say they love their work and feel that their voice is heard in all aspects of the children's care and education. Staff feel able to support children to reach their potential and beyond. Staff are very well deployed throughout the nursery and at key times, such as lunch time and transition visits the adult/child ratio is increased. The key person system is extremely well embedded. Children form very positive relationships and families feel that the key person is a trusted professional and a friend. The ethos of respect and fairness is embedded in this system and as a result the child is constantly at the centre of the learning and development cycle.

Children, parents and staff are given a voice within the setting and are able to effect change. Parents and other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, local authority officers and local school teachers contribute to the self-evaluation of the nursery and readily comment thorough regular focussed questionnaires. Feedback is noted and used to secure improvement, if required. For instance, de-cluttering some areas to improve communication friendly spaces, auditing talking 'hot-spots' and using dual language visual aids, have been introduced as a result of reflective practice and comments made.

Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. Observation, assessment and planning is monitored very well so that key persons know their children in depth and can readily discuss their age and stage of development. They have recently included children's attitudes and characteristics of learning in their planning and consider how children are learning. This exemplary practice is used to identify areas of need, children's interests and levels of engagement. Data shows that this has improved children's progress in all areas of learning. Planning is robust, observations are very well written, linked to children's age and stage of development and used effectively to assess children's learning and identify their next steps. Tracking documents and the progress check at age two are used with great effect to identify needs, show improvement and ensure activities are planned to enhance learning. The management team effectively monitor and moderate all planning and assessment. Copious data is collected on each child and is used very effectively to track and identify particular groups of children, such as summer born boys, those attending more than one setting or those with particular needs. Data is compared with that of a variety of other settings and with local schools thus giving the nursery a comparison of achievement. The acting manager is extending the already good data collection to show all areas of provision, including emotional attachment, in order to further enhance provision and ensure continuity and consistency of care for the most needy children.

Partnerships are a key strength of the nursery. Strong relationships with the children centre staff, local authority and other professionals have enabled nursery staff to further support and meet the needs of children and their families. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning and development process. They are warmly welcomed into the nursery at every opportunity. The very inspiring foyer contains a wealth of information for parents including health and safety in the sun, healthy eating and large photograph albums of all areas of the nursery 'Through a Child's Eyes'. Through daily information sheets, handover time room diaries, informal chats and regular more formal meetings parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress. A monthly newsletter gives advance notification of trips, outings and visits.

Parents readily access children centre classes and sessions which offer extended support and understanding of how to support their child at home. Nursery staff are often involved in the delivery of such sessions and this further strengthens their relationship with parents. Parents comment that the nursery staff are like extended family. They are supportive and give very good advice on how to help children at home. Also that staff have been instrumental in engaging with other professionals to access support for children. A parent says 'staff know me so well I can ask anything and be told a straight

answer. The nursery has done everything they can to be there for my child and me'. Parents all agree the nursery is amazing and gives an excellent start to their children's educational journey. This high quality effective nursery puts children at the very heart of everything they do and as a result children feel very well cared for and are very well motivated to continue to achieve their potential.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY350219
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	924079
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	35
Number of children on roll	63
Name of provider	Wirral Borough Council
Date of previous inspection	12/12/2011
Telephone number	0151 651 0901

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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