

The Beacon Nursery

YMCA Beacon, 25 College Street, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA10 1TF

Inspection date

22/08/2013

Previous inspection date

06/03/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- The range of resources both inside and out in the garden is very good. Children have lots of opportunities to explore and investigate.
- Children form good attachments to their key person and feel secure in the environment, so they are confident and keen to explore, knowing staff are close by to give support.
- Children are confident communicators, who enjoy sharing their thoughts and ideas with staff. Consequently, staff get to know them very well and plan activities specifically to develop their interests.
- Relationships with parents are strong. A monthly family club runs on a Saturday morning, social events are planned and parents' evenings offer opportunities to share the progress children make.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The range of information collected about children's needs on entry could be even more effective in helping staff to swiftly plan for each child, if parents are always asked to identify what their child can already do.
- The good relationship with external agencies could be extended further to establish targeted learning in specific areas for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including planning, observations and assessment records. She also looked at a range of policies, including information used to assess the suitability of staff, staff rotas, attendance registers and the setting's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector observed activities and care practices in all playrooms and within the outside play area. She conducted a joint observation with the manager, looking at the practice of staff.
- The inspector spoke with the children and staff from each room. She also held a meeting with the manager, deputy manager and centre manager.
- The inspector also took into account the views of parents spoken to during the inspection and read their responses to a recent questionnaire.
- The inspector examined a sample of children's learning records and enrolment forms.

Inspector

Valerie Aspinall

Full Report

Information about the setting

The Beacon Nursery was registered in 2007 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is managed by St. Helens YMCA and operates from the Beacon Building in walking distance of St. Helens town centre. Children use four nursery rooms and a sports hall for their care and activities. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery serves a wide catchment area and is accessible to all children.

The nursery employs 18 members of childcare staff. Of these, 14 have appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, including one member of staff, who holds a level 6 qualification. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round with the exception of bank holidays. Sessions are from 7.30am to 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 67 children on roll in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend the wide range of information gathered about children on entry by asking parents to identify what they know their children can already do, in order to swiftly plan to help each child make even more progress
- develop further the effective planning for individual children's progress by seeking the advice of health professionals to formulate appropriate interventions for specific areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

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

Children engage in active play with a wide range of resources that support all seven areas of learning. Babies have lots of opportunities to explore using their senses, they enjoy splashing in the water as staff model the quacking sound that ducks make. They examine the texture of play dough and large sheets of shiny foil and enjoy looking at photographs of their families and each other with staff. Staff provide musical instruments and pop up toys to help babies learn about cause and effect. Toddlers have a rich environment with

plenty of opportunities to investigate and explore. They enjoy playing independently and in small groups, in particular they enjoy the challenge of the outdoor space. They climb and balance with support from staff and play in the 'house' pretending to make tea. Staff read stories to individual children and sing songs in small groups before mealtimes. They repeat familiar action songs and rhymes, so help them to develop their communication.

Older children are becoming active learners; they move freely between the very well resourced indoor and outdoor areas, inventing their own games, which staff sensitively support. For example, they enjoy rolling cars down a large cardboard tube. Staff help them to understand that bigger cars get stuck in the tube and ask questions, such as 'how far do you think this one will go?' This helps children learn about speed and distance. They enjoy group story time, where staff use good intonation and dramatic effect to hold their attention. Staff take advantage of spontaneous events to teach children about the wider world. For example, children look curiously at the skins of a tarantula spider, a member of the centre staff has brought in to show them. Some children bravely hold the skins while staff explain how spiders shed their skins. These activities complement the areas of continuous provision, such as, construction, role play and writing areas. Children learn about numbers during the daily routine, for example, they count out the numbers of plates and cups at snack time, when staff ask them how many they need and know they need more cutlery. The good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities results in children being engaged and busy in their play and ready to make the transition to school when the time comes.

All children are observed frequently, new children are assessed during the settling-in period and this gives a starting point from which staff can plan to help them make progress. However, the information collected from parents on the 'all about me' sheet focuses more on children's care needs and less on the developmental milestones children have already achieved. This means that planning to help children make progress is not always as swift as possible. Staff build the next steps for children's learning into activities they have shown an interest in. For example, children that show great interest and knowledge of dinosaurs have made their own 'book' about them, adding their own descriptions, which staff have annotated. Specific adult books about dinosaurs have been bought to extend children's knowledge further and information and photographs from a palaeontology museum have been collected. Children confidently explain that 'dinosaurs are very big, as big as right up to the baby room' demonstrating that staff teach mathematical concepts through children's interests. All staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of how to promote the learning and development of their key children. They observe, evaluate and plan for each child and develop seasonal themes to extend children's learning further. However, difficulties in establishing effective partnerships with health professionals means that targeted learning and support has not been identified for every child, who needs it. Despite this, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress in the prime areas of learning and children generally, are making good progress in all areas of learning.

Parents are encouraged to share their children's experiences at home through daily discussion with staff. As a result, staff know children very well and talk to them about their home life, which helps them to feel valued. Staff give verbal feedback to parents each day. Younger babies have a diary to take home, detailing their meals, sleeps and nappy

changes. Regular termly summaries detail the progress children are making towards the early learning goals, which helps parents to continue their child's learning at home. They have access to their children's learning files at all times and staff share these at parents' evenings.

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

Parents' comment that their children have settled in to the nursery quickly and enjoy spending time with their friends and key person. Children are confident, communicative and independent; this shows they are forming secure attachments. Flexible settling-in sessions ensure staff quickly get to know children's likes, dislikes and familiar routines. This contributes to the smooth transition from home. When children are ready to move rooms, staff complete a summary of their development for the next key person. Alongside further settling-in visits, this helps children to confidently ease into their new room and promotes their personal, social and emotional development.

The nursery environment is bright and welcoming and offers children opportunities to play in a number of very well-equipped areas. The children's playrooms are arranged, so children can access resources themselves and have spaces to be messy, as well as cosier, cushioned areas with mirrors for relaxation. Children play well together and enjoy each other's company; they help with housekeeping tasks, such as emptying the dishwasher and setting the table for lunch. Staff speak to children in a calm and quiet way and gently remind them to share and look after the resources. Consequently, children's behaviour is very good. Staff plan activities to promote learning about a range of cultures. Children are taught about celebrations, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year, these activities help them to gain an understanding of the wider world.

Children are offered a healthy and nutritious diet that includes fresh fruit and vegetables daily. Older children pour their own drinks and serve themselves at mealtimes and this helps to promote their growing independence. Posters, tasting activities and growing fruit and vegetables help children to learn about healthy eating. Outdoor play is available everyday, whatever the weather and children also regularly access a gym with child-sized equipment. Staff encourage them to show their 'gym pass' and 'write' an account of the exercises they have done, modelling the experience adults, who attend a gym have. This further develops their physical skills and helps children to develop a healthy lifestyle. Staff encourage younger children to negotiate balance beams and climbing equipment with their support. Older children feel responsible and grown up as they use china plates and real glasses for drinks at mealtimes, which they are taught to use safely. Consequently, children of all ages are beginning to learn about safety and risk. This attitude helps children to persist with more challenging activities when they eventually move on to school.

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

Recruitment procedures are effective and all the relevant checks are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Staff have a robust induction where they have

time to become familiar with the setting, children and the staff team before they are allocated the responsibility of key children. Staff returning from absence, such as maternity leave, also have a back to work induction to bring them up to date with any changes in policy, procedure or the Early Years Foundation Stage. Safety of children is paramount. There are very effective procedures in place to ensure children are kept safe. Staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding because they have regular training, they are able to identify possible signs of abuse and know how to report concerns about children's welfare. Several staff have first aid certificates and appropriate accident and medicine records are in place. Staff carry out daily risk assessments and check the identity of all visitors.

Staff practice is observed informally on a daily basis and staff have regular supervision with the manager, who sets appropriate targets to help them develop professionally. Staff development and training is ongoing. Every term the deputy manager monitors the progress children make in all areas of learning. She gives good support to all staff to ensure that teaching supports all children appropriately. She noticed that mathematics was an area where children were not making the best progress. As a result, she found suitable training for staff and invested in additional mathematical resources.

The manager is pro-active in seeking support and is highly reflective. Action plans are in place and good progress is being made towards the goals she has set. For example, the outdoor space has recently been developed and now offers children a wide range of learning opportunities. The nursery self-evaluation is celebratory of the progress the nursery is making, while also identifying areas for development. For example, there are plans to develop story sacks for parents and children to borrow, to help parents support their children's learning at home. Staff are involved in the evaluation process and parents are asked to complete questionnaires asking for their views. The nursery is keen to develop strong partnerships with parents and runs a Saturday morning family club, which is well attended, particularly by fathers. Social events, such as the leavers' graduation ceremony are held and regular parents' evenings to share the progress children are making, are offered.

Partnerships with social workers, health visitors and speech therapists are generally good, however, for some children this is not as effective as it could be in ensuring targeted learning is in place. The local authority supports the setting and key staff attend local cluster meetings, in order to share good practice. The manager is keen to build relationships with other local early years settings and has hosted visits to the nursery. Teachers from schools in the area are invited to meet children prior to starting reception class. The manager uses newsletters, email and notice boards to keep parents up to date with nursery life. Parents' comment on the friendliness and professionalism of the staff, they are kept informed of their children's development and feel they are making good progress.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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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	EY363360
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	915562
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	64
Number of children on roll	67
Name of provider	St Helens YMCA
Date of previous inspection	06/03/2012
Telephone number	01744 750 848

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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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