

Southampton University Early Years Centre

Building 41, University Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO17 1BJ

Inspection date	24/03/2014
Previous inspection date	17/01/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children come into nursery well, they are happy, settled and relate well to staff and other children.
- Parents are actively encouraged to share information about their child through the 'path to plan' forms and staff use this to help plan children's activities.
- The regular use of the outdoor play areas and weekly planned activities, such as the Fit- Kids programme help promote children's physical development well.
- Clear risk assessments are in place to help staff identify and minimise risks to children.

It is not yet good because

- Induction procedures are not sufficiently thorough for temporary members of staff, which results in them not being fully aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Some staff do extend children's learning well and do not maximise opportunities to model language and introduce new words correctly to extend children's vocabulary.
- Children have few opportunities to explore and express themselves through creative activities as some staff do things for them, which limits children's learning experiences.
- At times, staff do not fully organise some routines and activities effectively. This results in children sometimes waiting around or not being fully engaged.

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 observed children's play and staff interaction, indoors and outside.
- The inspector looked at documentation including a sample of children's records, planning and records to check staff suitability.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to staff and parents.
- The inspector looked at the systems used by the provider to evaluate the provision.

Inspector

Dinah Round

Full report

Information about 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 centre is registered on the early years register. There are currently 179 children, aged from four months to five years, on roll. The centre provides funded early education for children aged two, three and four years. Children come from a wide catchment area and are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The staff care for a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language.

The centre employs 41 full-time and part-time members of staff. Of these, 36 hold appropriate early years qualifications; five hold qualifications at level 4 and two at level 5. There are three members of staff who have Early Years Professional Status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- improve the induction procedures so there are more formal systems in place for temporary staff to help them understand their roles and responsibilities from the start
- increase staff skills and understanding of how to extend activities and help all children achieve the next steps in their learning, with particular regard to children's communication and language, and creative play experiences.

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

- review the organisation of routines and activities to more clearly focus on the children's individual needs.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall, children make steady progress in their learning and development. Staff organise the playrooms into different age groups to help promote children's learning in all areas. Staff liaise with parents to gain information about children's abilities, likes and dislikes on the 'My unique child' form when children first start. They use this information appropriately to help settle children and plan for their future learning. Weekly planning covers all areas of learning and follows specific topics, such as 'Spring', as well as taking account of children's interests. This provides children with a varied range of play and learning opportunities. Parents are encouraged to share information of family events and children's interests through the termly 'path to plan' forms which staff take into account when planning activities. Staff carry out observational assessments to help them monitor children's achievements and when children are aged two years staff complete the required progress checks. Parents are able to view their child's learning journal at any time as well as during the more formal parents meetings. This encourages parents to get actively involved in their children's learning.

Staff help children to develop appropriate skills for the future and children show increasing independence in their personal care. They wash their hands before eating and staff offer sensitive support as children learn to pour their own drinks and pull zips up on their coats. This helps children become independent in readiness for school. Staff take an interest in children's play, talking and playing with children to encourage conversation. However, the quality of teaching is variable and this affects children's communication and language development. For example, some staff do not model language correctly as they use words such as 'sockie' and 'horsie' and this does not correctly help to build on the children's vocabulary. Children enjoy regular singing and rhyme sessions and staff include songs that link to children's interests and home language. For example, staff incorporate a rhyme about animals after children have a visit to the zoo and sing a song to children in French. This supports children who are learning English as an additional language as they hear their home language as well as English. Older children join in counting rhymes and staff encourage them to use their fingers and count out 'how many' currant buns are left when one is taken away. This introduces children to number language and some simple calculation. Children have access to a variety of sensory play experiences, such as sand, water, gluing and sticking and dough. The younger children enjoy feeling the different textures of various objects in the treasure baskets. However, some of the planned activities are very adult-led. For example, an activity to make flowers from hand prints is adult directed as staff paint the children's hands then place children's hands on the paper to make a print. Consequently, children are not able to freely explore and experiment through these creative play experiences which means staff miss opportunities to extend children's learning.

Staff promote children's physical development well. Children have regular use of the nursery garden and enjoy being active as they run around and play in the fresh air. Children show good control as they manoeuvre the wheeled toys and balance on the wooden blocks. Staff stay close by the climbing frame to provide reassurance and help children play safely. The younger children are also taken on regular walks around the local environment to widen their experiences. Older children take part in weekly 'Fit-kids' sessions where they use larger play equipment to develop their balancing skills, and enjoy kicking and throwing balls. This helps children learn new skills and how to use equipment safely. Children learn about people who work in their local community as they have visits

from the police officer, fire brigade and librarian.

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

Children come into the nursery happily and settle well. All children have an allocated key person who has the responsibility to care for their individual needs and to share information with parents. As a result, children have built trusting relationships with adults and they feel settled and secure. Generally, key staff work in specific rooms and they link with other staff before they go on leave so information about their key children's needs is shared. In the baby room each child's individual routine is displayed so all staff working with the babies have access to the information. This enables the staff to follow children's specific routines helping provide consistency for children. Staff interact with children in a friendly and caring manner, and as a result, children are confident to approach them for help if needed. Children have access to a suitable range of age-appropriate play equipment and resources. Much of the equipment is stored in low-level units which encourages children to make choices about their play.

Effective security systems are in place to prevent any unauthorised visitors entering the premises. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to help staff identify and minimise risks to children with any necessary action taken to keep children safe. Senior management continually monitors the accident reports to identify any issues to enable action to be taken to reduce risks in future. For example, following an accident on the outdoor wooden pirate ship the particular piece of play equipment was removed to prevent any further accidents. Staff teach children how to come down the stairs safely as they give gentle reminders to hold onto the rail and to walk slowly. Children listen carefully and follow the instructions helping them learn how to keep themselves safe. Staff and children take part in regular fire drills so they learn what they need to do if they have to evacuate the premises. Staff give children clear messages to help children manage their behaviour appropriately. In the pre-school room after tidy up time staff sing as they tap their knees 'everybody sit down, sit down' and children cooperate well and come together for the group activity. The older children work together with their friends to complete a puzzle, proudly saying 'we've done it by ourselves' as they complete it. Staff praise their achievements helping to raise children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children are familiar with the daily routines and know the importance of washing their hands before eating. Staff follow appropriate nappy changing procedures, however, they take several children into the changing area together. Consequently, young children are kept waiting in the toilet area, wandering around and not engaged in purposeful play. Staff promote a healthy lifestyle at the nursery. They are aware of children's individual health and dietary requirements and ensure all food provided takes account of these so that children remain healthy. Children benefit from healthy and nutritious snacks and meals which are delivered to the premises daily. Staff sit with the children and encourage them to feed themselves to support children in becoming independent.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years

provision

The inspection was brought forward following information received by Ofsted that raised concerns about unvetted staff being left alone with children, staffing and induction procedures. The inspection found that management are clear of their responsibilities and have a bank of temporary staff they can call on for additional cover to maintain the required adult-child ratios. Lunchtime staff are also employed to work with children and help serve lunches to ensure that adult-child ratios are maintained during this period. Extra staff are employed to do cleaning duties after children have left at the end of the day. This enables staff to spend their time caring for children during the day. There are clear recruitment and vetting procedures in place to check that staff are suitable to work with children. All the permanently employed staff do not start work until all checks have been completed, which includes a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Temporary staff may start before checks are completed, but the other staff members supervise them and they are not left alone with children. However, although there are clear induction procedures in place for permanent staff members this is less formal for temporary staff. While there are some induction procedures in place for new staff, temporary staff can be working for several weeks before they have an induction which means that some are less clear than others of their roles and responsibilities. Overall, the management and staff have a clear understanding of child protection issues. This includes the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care which contributes towards promoting children's safety and welfare.

Overall, staff are deployed appropriately to support children's needs and to make sure that children are suitably supervised. They work together well to exchange information relating to children's care needs so children feel comfortable. However, at times activities are not always well organised to effectively engage all the children. For example, staff plan activities for younger children in large groups and expect children to sit for quite a while but some children begin to lose interest. The senior management team carries out regular staff supervision meetings and encourages staff to evaluate their performance through annual personal performance development reviews. This helps identify any staff training needs so management can organise specific training, such as in-house training on behaviour management. This supports the staff's continual professional development. The management are clear of their role to monitor the educational provision with senior staff reviewing the children's learning journals and weekly planning of activities. They continue to evaluate and assess the provision, and generally, systems are helpful in bringing about improvements for children. The management encourages parents to share their views through the annual questionnaire with any comments and suggestions welcomed. For example, a feedback board has been provided in each age group area to give parents more details about what children have been doing during the day. The management links with their local authority for advice and support.

Staff work in partnership with parents and other professionals in order to provide continuity in the support children receive. Staff help to prepare children for their move to school and where possible a child's key person will accompany them on a visit to their school. They share information about children's development with the children's school teachers, in agreement with parents. This helps promote continuity of care. Parents

receive clear information about the nursery through regular newsletters, ongoing communication and notice boards. This keeps parents well-informed and kept up-to-date with any changes in the nursery provision.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY258679
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	955212
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 4
Total number of places	112
Number of children on roll	179
Name of provider	Southampton University
Date of previous inspection	17/01/2011
Telephone number	023 8059 3465

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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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