



Office for Standards  
in Education

## **Inspection Report**

### **MARTENSCROFT EARLY EXCELLENCE CENTRE**

Unique Reference Number: 105384

LEA: Manchester

Inspection Dates: 6 – 8 July 2004

Reporting Inspector: Susan Gregory HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 as part of work associated with Ofsted's developments for future inspection in schools. Under Section 12 (3) of the Act, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) elects that the inspection shall be treated as if it were an inspection under section 10 of the Act.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Martenscroft Early Excellence Centre and of the local education authority. A Children Act Part X A inspection to the National Standards for Day Care and Childminding was carried out in addition to the inspection of the nursery education and the Centre's services. The Children Act inspection report is appended at Annex A.

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and a senior childcare inspector.

### **Key for inspection grades:**

Grade 1	Very good
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Adequate
Grade 4	Not adequate

The inspection judgements (key inspection grades) were made in relation to standards. Inspectors judged whether the Centre met, or did not meet the standards.

### **Description of the Centre**

Martenscroft is located in the City of Manchester. It became an Early Excellence Centre in 1999, received early designation as a Sure Start Children's Centre in August 2003 and is at the heart of Manchester's Early Excellence Zone (EEZ). It provides integrated day care and education for children aged between six months and five years and a range of services for families and the community. The Centre is a venue for the EEZ and also houses a learning resource area, including facilities for information and communication technology classes for adults. The Centre works with a wide range of partners.

When children first start in the nursery class the majority are below the levels expected in personal, language and mathematical development for their age. The majority of children are from economically disadvantaged homes and a high proportion are from minority ethnic groups. Ten different languages are spoken, and fifteen children are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of children with identified special needs is low; one child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

The governing body was constituted in September 2003. The director (head) of the Centre and governors took over the management of the Centre's budget from April 2004.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CENTRE**

Martenscroft is an effective Early Excellence Centre which provides good value for money. Its staff and parents whose children attend the Centre are rightly proud of it. The Centre provides a valuable resource for the local community and is already meeting some of its important aims by providing good quality education and day care and helping parents to gain employment. The staff have created a positive environment in which different languages, racial backgrounds and cultural traditions are celebrated enthusiastically. In every part of the Centre, children make good progress, particularly in their personal and academic development, because adults are skilled at integrating the day care they provide with the children's early education. The Centre knows its strengths well and what it needs to do to improve. It is right to be confident that it is providing a good service and that the high quality of care, effective teaching and rich curriculum provide children with a good start. The leaders and managers have developed strong and successful partnerships with staff, governors and parents. They are providing a clear direction and successfully improving the quality of the Centre's work.

**Grade: 2**

### **Capacity to improve**

The Centre has not previously been inspected. Its nursery school was last inspected in 1997 and has successfully met the areas identified for improvement. For example, more capable children were not making enough progress, especially in mathematics, but this is no longer the case. Senior staff and the newly constituted governing body are setting challenging goals to further develop the Centre's education and childcare services. Staff have accurately identified where the most important improvements are needed and have decided what needs to be done to achieve them. There is a strong team approach and the capacity to further improve the Centre's services is good.

**Grade: 2**

### **What the Centre should do to improve further**

In order to further improve standards and children's achievement, the director of the Centre, staff and governors should make better use of the data they gather to:

- help them plan improvements to the Centre's work
- monitor the progress of different groups of children.

## **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

Children love being at Martenscroft and the majority do well, whether occupying a place for day care or for early education. This includes those with special educational needs (SEN) and those learning to speak English as an additional language. In the areas of learning such as communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, children make good progress from a below average starting point and consequently, older four year-olds reach the levels expected for their ages and abilities.

In their exploration of the world, which builds the foundations for early science work, and areas like information and communication technology and design and technology, children

are building the expected levels of knowledge, understanding and skills. Older children demonstrate that they have especially good physical skills; they use their bodies to run, jump, climb, and to pedal tricycles, with a very well-developed sense of space and each other. All this represents good progress. The children are interested in what they do and have very good attitudes. This has been helped by a dramatic improvement in attendance made through joint efforts by staff and parents. They become confident, independent learners within a safe and healthy environment.

Children at the early stages of learning English achieve well because when they start at the Centre their needs are quickly identified and they are given good additional support. Children with SEN also progress well because the co-ordinator is proactive and ensures that all staff are well trained. She has established very strong links with other agencies and professionals. These links mean that the children and their parents are supported well.

Children make very good progress in every aspect of their personal development and in this area of learning, the majority of older four year-olds are well on the way to achieving the national early learning goals much earlier than expected. The children's moral and social development is very good and they quickly become well-behaved. They have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and develop a strong sense of belonging within the Centre. Staff relationships with children are extremely good and these, together with consistent approaches to behaviour management help the children to manage change and any minor squabbles very effectively.

Children make a genuine contribution to the life of the Centre. For instance they helped to choose the Centre's golden rules and decided what they would like in the outdoor area when it was recently re-developed. They are trusted to do things on their own. This enables them to work as part of a team to solve practical problems, such as when nursery children successfully collaborated to build a ramp for their vehicles. Small groups of children gather regularly with an adult to share their feelings and this enhances their emotional development. This is having a good impact not just on those with particularly challenging behaviour but also on children's self-esteem and mental health. Their spiritual development is good and is enhanced by the regular golden day celebrations where babies, toddlers and older children have good opportunities to reflect on the achievements and successes of their friends. Cultural development is very good and promoted through the rich cultural mix within the Centre, which enables all the children to celebrate and enjoy their differences.

**Grade: 2**

## **QUALITY OF PROVISION**

Parents and staff are right to be confident that the children are well provided for. Children across the Centre are taught well. They feel secure because much of their care and teaching is provided by a particular adult who gets to know them well and is able to adapt the teaching to meet their needs. Regular routines, coupled with effective strategies for managing minor disputes and challenging behaviour when it occurs, ensure that children can concentrate and learn.

Almost all the teaching across the Centre is good and some of it is very good. During the inspection no inadequate teaching was seen. There are a number of features that make the teaching successful. For instance, the staff have a good knowledge of the ways in which children develop and learn. They have successfully put in place a good balance between activities which children choose and those which are taught to a particular group. As a result, the children are helped to engage purposefully in a broad range of activities which develop their personal, academic and physical well-being with appropriate rest periods

according to their age. Staff make good use of attractive resources which capture children's imagination and help to sustain their concentration for long periods. This works particularly well when children are taught to identify and use numbers, or when they learn about sounds and use these to locate labels bearing their names. Most staff are good at extending children's vocabulary and developing their language skills. This means that from an early age children become good listeners and confident speakers. By the time children are ready to leave the nursery the majority are able to engage in extended dialogue with adults and other children. When the teaching is very effective it is especially lively and interesting and engages children particularly well by eliciting and building on their own views and ideas. It also provides an effective structure for their learning by sharing with children what they are to learn and recapping this at the end of short sessions.

Ways in which staff assess children's learning across the Centre are secure and firmly based on regular observations. Occasionally, staff evaluations of children's learning do not provide a clear indication of how well the children have done or what the next steps might be. Senior staff are addressing this through targeted training and support.

It is not just the teaching that helps children to do well. They also have access to a curriculum which is stimulating, broad and balanced and based well on national guidance for children under three years of age and those that are older in the Foundation Stage. They are provided with a good range of opportunities to follow their own interests both in and out of doors. In particular, the well-designed outside area allows them to develop and enjoy a range of healthy and physical activities. Projects such as 'Smiling for Life', which focuses on dental health, daily routines for lunch and fruit times encourage healthy eating.

Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children are happy and come to no harm; this is a strength of the Centre's work. There are clear, effective policies and procedures which are understood and followed by all staff. The Centre also works very well with other agencies to identify vulnerable children and provide them and their families with appropriate support.

The quality of the registered childcare within the Centre is good and meets all fourteen of the National Standards for Day Care and Childminding. Staff show a thorough understanding of each child's individual needs and care of the very youngest children is excellent. The environment within which children learn is relaxed and calm and this develops their confidence especially well.

There are also highly effective systems in place for inducting children to the Centre, including those with special needs and those learning to speak English. Partnerships are quickly formed with parents to ensure that their children are provided with the support and help that is needed. When children transfer to another setting or school there are very good arrangements in place to ensure each child's needs are fully known.

Staff have secure procedures in place for monitoring the academic progress of individuals. They praise the children and give constant and positive feedback, for example, by explaining why some behaviour is unacceptable.

**Grade: 2**

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?**

Leadership and management are good and leaders know well, the Centre's strengths and the less effective aspects of its work. The recently constituted governing body has made a good start in meeting its statutory requirements. It is already proactive in taking strategic decisions about the longer term development of the Centre, including the delegated

management of the budget from April this year. It has a clear view of how to continue to develop its role as a critical friend. Good working relationships have been established between the governors and staff and together they are starting to review deployment across the Centre to further improve the quality of day care and education. However, governors and the senior team are not making enough use of the available data to refine action plans and recommendations about what needs to be done to improve the quality of work.

Key to the Centre's effectiveness is the way in which the director, her deputy and senior staff have successfully created an inclusive environment in which every child and their families matter. They are well on the way to achieving the excellent community resource they want the Centre to be. Leaders have identified what needs to be done and effectively coach and support working groups to achieve their goals. All staff are valued and respected for their expertise and have been brought together into a unified team. They are clear about what they are expected to do and those with particular responsibilities are well supported. They are actively encouraged to access training that leads to further qualifications. In this way, senior managers are successfully developing the skills needed to lead the projects that are crucial to the Centre's continued improvement.

The day-to-day management of the Centre is very good. The performance of all staff is effectively monitored; this is closely linked to what the Centre needs to do to improve and is having a good impact on children's progress. One of the Centre's priorities has been to develop a system that tracks the progress of older children. Although this has provided senior staff with helpful information about how well individual children perform in different areas of learning over the period of a term, it does not provide them with sufficient evidence to rigorously track the progress of different groups of children. Senior staff know that they are not taking enough account of all the data they gather and have started to tackle this.

The Director has formed strong, effective relationships with parents and other agencies and services. She is highly regarded and is influential in disseminating good practice across the Early Excellence Zone. For example, with her deputy and other senior staff, she has been instrumental in developing guidance for early years' providers in different settings. Notably, the Centre's partnership with the Zone is enabling parents to access training, gain qualifications and obtain work. This is having a significant impact; as a result of such training opportunities, the number of families receiving income support has been reduced.

**Grade: 2**

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>The Centre is effective and efficient</b> in promoting children's achievement and personal development in an enjoyable, safe and healthy environment	<b>2</b>
Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	<b>2</b>
Improvement since the last inspection	<b>2</b>
Capacity to make further improvements	<b>2</b>
Achievement and standards	<b>2</b>
The quality of provision	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management	<b>2</b>

Description of standard	Meets/Does not meet
<b>Standard 1:</b> Learners' progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills is satisfactory	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 2:</b> Learners' enjoy their education, make satisfactory progress in their personal development and are making a positive contribution to the community	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 3:</b> Learners stay safe and healthy and learn to take care of themselves and others	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 4:</b> The teaching promotes satisfactory progress in learners' knowledge, understanding and skills and in their personal development	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 5:</b> The curriculum and other activities meet the needs and interests of learners and prepare them for later life, and are in keeping with external requirements	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 6:</b> Care, guidance and other support safeguard learners' welfare and promote their present and future well-being	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 7:</b> Learners at risk of poor attendance, exclusion or dropping out are supported to remain in education and training	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 8:</b> The leadership and management promote high standards, monitor performance and deal with any weaknesses	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 9:</b> The leadership and management promote equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination, so that all learners make progress	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 10:</b> The governing body has taken reasonable steps to comply with statutory requirements	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 11:</b> Resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Standard 12:</b> Links with other partners of education and care and any extended services make a satisfactory contribution to learning, personal development and community services	<b>Yes</b>



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**Office for Standards  
in Education**

## **DAY CARE INSPECTION REPORT**

**URN** 954758/JJM/IOTA

### **INSPECTION DETAILS**

Inspection Date                      06/07/2004  
Inspector Name                        Cathy Morgan

### **SETTING DETAILS**

Day Care Type                      Full Day Care  
   Out of School Day Care  
   Creche Day Care  
Setting Name                         Martenscroft Early Excellence Centre  
Setting Address                      33 Epping Street  
   Hulme  
   Manchester  
   M15 6PA

### **REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS**

Name                                    Manchester City Council Early Years and Play

This inspection was carried out under the provisions of Part XA of the Children Act 1989, as inserted by the Care Standards Act 2000

## **ABOUT THE INSPECTION**

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care. When making judgements, inspectors have regard to how well the provider meets the National Standards for under Eights Day Care and Childminding. A list of these is attached. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement.

This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

### **Information about the setting**

Martenscroft Early Excellence Centre has been established since September 1999 and was designated as a Children's Centre in August 2003. It is an integrated service offering a maintained nursery class, full day care, out of school provision and an occasional creche.

It is part of the Martenscroft Early Excellence Zone which is a network of private and voluntary providers of early years and other related services. Martenscroft is situated in a purpose built single storey building in the Hulme area of Manchester. It serves the local community and also takes children from a wider area.

There are three children's rooms (including the nursery classroom), a hall, a sensory room, a range of secure outdoor areas, and a room which is used for the after school club and the creche.

Facilities available for the local community include adult/toddler sessions, a training room, the sensory room and a learning resource area.

Martenscroft cares for a maximum of 50 children under five years in the day care provision, and a maximum of 52 children under eight years in the holiday playscheme. The creche cares for a maximum of 20 children under 5 years. The Centre is open from 07.30 to 17.30 Monday to Friday 50 weeks of the year.

The centre is also open in the evenings and at weekends for community use and early years practitioners meetings.

There are 94 children on roll (including those in the nursery class) of whom 15 children have English as an additional language and 1 child has been identified as having special educational needs. Thirteen children are in receipt of nursery education funding.

Sixteen staff work with the day care and out of school children, of whom 14 hold relevant childcare qualifications. There are three qualified teachers on the staff team and two centre workers who work in the nursery class. The setting receives support from an Ethnic Minority Achievement Worker, an Inclusion support worker and a part-time speech and language therapist.

### **How good is the Day Care?**

Martenscroft Early Excellence Centre provides good quality care for children. The Centre is bright and attractive with an excellent range of resources for all age groups both indoors and out. The space is used creatively to provide an exciting and stimulating environment for all children. Good attention is paid to the safety and cleanliness of the premises. Staff are mostly well qualified and experienced. Good systems are in place to ensure that staff ratios are met, and children benefit from being in small groups with staff.

Staff help children to develop an understanding of good hygiene practices and there are secure procedures for administering medication. Risk assessments are carried out regularly to ensure children's safety, and the premises are very secure. The Centre has its own kitchen and follows a healthy eating policy with an emphasis on fresh fruit and vegetables. Children enjoy the home cooking and all their individual dietary needs are met. All children are treated equally and encouraged to join in with all the activities. The Centre celebrates a wide range of different cultural traditions and festivals. Children are protected from harm due to an effective Child Protection policy that works well in practice.

Activities are planned across all age groups to help children develop a range of skills. Staff know children well and talk and listen to them with interest. Children are independent and enjoy choosing their own activities with support from staff. The very youngest children form good attachments and are cared for in a calm, relaxed atmosphere. Children of all ages behave well and staff are skilled at promoting good behaviour through praise and encouragement.

Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their individual children and are consulted about new developments in the Centre. Relationships between staff and parents are good.

### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

At the last inspection, the Centre was asked to complete five actions, four of these concerned documentation, including ensuring the Child Protection policy complies with ACPC procedures; devising and implementing a sick child policy; ensuring details of the regulator are included in the complaints procedure; and ensuring there are operational procedures for outings. The fifth action concerned the availability of fresh drinking water. All the actions have been met and as a result children are now more secure and well cared for.

### **What is being done well?**

- Children under two benefit from activities and resources to meet their specific needs, such as sensory environments for babies. Staff create a calm and relaxed atmosphere within which children form good attachments and play confidently and happily.
- The premises and resources are very well organised and designed to create a stimulating and attractive environment for all ages of children. The outdoor play space is particularly well planned, for example children enjoy the outdoor 'carwash' role play area.
- Children's behaviour is very good. There is a good behaviour management policy that is well understood and implemented by staff. Staff are good role models and use praise and encouragement to reinforce good behaviour. Voices are never raised.
- Child protection policies and procedures are very effective. The Centre prioritises the protection of children and staff are well aware of their duty of care. Information is shared with parents and there are very good links with other agencies such as social services and health.

### **What needs to be improved?**

- The qualification of the out of school playleader.
- The numbers of staff with up to date first aid training.

**Outcome of the inspection:** Good

### **CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION**

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

### **WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**

**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

**Std: 2**

#### **Recommendation**

Ensure that sufficient staff in the centre have up to date first aid qualifications and that the out of school play leader meets qualification requirements.

### **SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS**

#### **Standard 1 – Suitable Person**

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

#### **Standard 2 – Organisation**

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

#### **Standard 3 – Care, learning and play**

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

#### **Standard 4 – Physical environment**

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

#### **Standard 5 – Equipment**

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

#### **Standard 6 – Safety**

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

#### **Standard 7 – Health**

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

#### **Standard 8 – Food and drink**

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

#### **Standard 9 – Equal opportunities**

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

#### **Standard 10 – Special needs (including special educational needs and disabilities)**

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

#### **Standard 11 – Behaviour**

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

**Standard 12 – Working in partnership with parents and carers**

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

**Standard 13 – Child protection**

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

**Standard 14 – Documentation**

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.