



## Sunflower Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sunflower Children's Centre is a privately owned setting, which opened in February 2002.

It operates from a purpose built, single storey building in the Charnock area of Sheffield, adjacent to Charnock Primary School. The centre serves the local community. The accommodation consists of five separate classrooms, an office, kitchen, toilet facilities and outdoor play area.

The centre is open every weekday, except for Bank Holidays, between 07.30 and 18.30, offering full day care to 73 children from 0 to 8 years. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The centre offers a Breakfast Club, Out of School Club and Holiday Play-care.

A team of 26 staff work with the children. Of these, 14 hold appropriate early years qualifications and 5 staff are working towards this. There is one member of staff who holds an early years teaching qualification.

There are 143 children currently on roll. Of these, 86 children receive funding for early education. The centre currently supports a number of children with learning disabilities.

The setting was awarded the Sheffield Kite mark Gold standard in 2004 and regained the Investors in People award in 2006.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a clean, well-maintained environment where health and hygiene issues are given very high priority. Staff carefully implement agreed procedures for hand washing and notices are posted near sinks as reminders for them. Anti-bacterial soap dispensers and paper towels are readily available and staff ensure that tables and work surfaces are regularly cleaned. Excellent standards of hygiene are maintained in the kitchen, which is very well equipped for the level of catering undertaken.

Staff actively promote hygiene routines within everyday practice, so that children learn to keep themselves healthy. Children understand that they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. The design of the nursery, with toilet areas readily accessible from playrooms, enables children to develop independence with personal care. Colourful handprint posters and notices help to remind children about the importance of washing. The nursery's participation in the "Stop the Rot" campaign effectively encourages children to look after their teeth and to clean them regularly. All children have their own toothbrushes that they use after lunch. Planned activities, such as making simple graphs to show how much sugar is in different foods, help to raise children's awareness of how they can protect their teeth from decay.

Children enjoy a healthy, balanced menu of freshly cooked foods. The nursery employs three cooks for different times of the day, all of whom have food hygiene training. There is also a qualified dietician in the staff team who has worked with the catering staff and with a special computer package to devise nutritionally balanced meals. Children enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables each day. Older children serve themselves and are encouraged to try new foods. Staff find inventive ways of doing this, such as by making a "Hide and Seek" pizza which incorporates lots of vegetables, that children may not otherwise try. The provision of water dispensers in

the playrooms encourages children to have regular drinks and staff talk to them about why this is important, especially if they are hot after running about outside.

Children's health and dietary needs are met very well. Staff liaise closely with parents to ensure that they are well informed about any individual requirements and there are effective procedures in place to ensure that all staff know about any allergies. They find out about the sleep patterns of younger children and are responsive to them if they show signs of tiredness. Children develop a good understanding of the importance of protecting themselves against the sun. They know that they need to put on sun cream and hats and older children are keen to demonstrate how they can do this for themselves.

Children enjoy lots of fresh air and exercise in the interesting outdoor area. Staff are developing a "free flow" system so that children can make choices about where they play. Children very much enjoy being outside where they have access to an extensive range of equipment to promote physical skills. The outdoor space is partitioned and daily routines planned to enable children of varying ages to access the area safely.

Children skilfully use equipment, such as the climbing frame, see-saw and small roundabout. They negotiate space successfully as they steer wheeled toys around the area and play running and chasing games. They develop good balancing skills, using log "stepping stones" and buckets. Children enjoy playing in the large sandpit where they can feel the sand between their toes and imagine they are on the beach. There are opportunities for children to construct creatively with large materials' using items, such as plastic crates, pipes and large wooden blocks. Staff resource the outdoor space imaginatively, which encourages children to use it in different ways. For example, they can be active or they can choose to sit and read quietly if they wish.

Indoors, babies and toddlers use furniture to pull themselves up and practise walking, using push and pull along toys. They are encouraged to move around and to explore their environment. For example, they reach out and handle boxes and cartons and roll soft play equipment along the floor. Staff stay physically close to them to provide support if needed. All children show developing skills as they engage in activities which foster good hand-eye coordination, such as filling small containers using a spoon, threading beads and large buttons, and using mark making equipment.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Staff give very careful attention to the security of children within the building. There is a coded lock device and alarm on the outer door, restricting access to authorised persons only. Parents and visitors are greeted by a member of staff and notices are posted to remind them of the importance of closing doors and gates behind them. Safety gates are in place internally to ensure that children are kept safe within designated areas.

Effective measures are taken to maintain a safe and welcoming environment, where

children can enjoy their play and develop independence within safe limits. For example, radiators are guarded and devices fitted on doors to prevent fingers being trapped. There are safety surfaces beneath outdoor play equipment and non-slip floor coverings indoors. Staff are careful to wipe up any spillages and display warning signs if necessary. Fire safety is addressed well overall, although drills are not planned frequently enough to ensure that all are familiar with procedures and escape routes. Risk assessments and daily checks are made of the indoor and outdoor environment.

Children learn to use play areas and equipment safely as part of everyday routines and also as part of planned activities. For example, a small group of children learn how to handle real woodworking equipment safely. Under the careful supervision of staff, they examine the tools, talk together about how they are used and the care that needs to be taken. Visitors, such as a fireman and a paramedic, are invited into the nursery to talk to the children about the work they do and about how they can keep themselves safe. Such activities help to raise children's awareness of safety issues.

Children enjoy a varied selection of toys and play materials. They are mostly stored in boxes, labelled with picture and word to make them easily and safely accessible. There is suitable equipment in the baby room to ensure that the very young children can sit, sleep and play comfortably.

Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities with regard to child protection. Senior members of the team have completed more advanced child protection training and ensure that all are familiar with the procedures to be followed should there be any concerns.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in nursery and most are settled and confident. Transitions are managed carefully to help children to feel secure in less familiar surroundings. For example, toddlers moving into the "Potting Shed" have the support of their key worker until they are settled. Children moving on to school have opportunities to engage in more focused activities to help prepare them for a new learning environment. In addition, during the first days at school, a trusted member of the nursery team is based there with them to provide assistance and support. Children also make visits to school for special assemblies.

Babies enjoy cuddles and physical closeness from staff who get to know them well. They are encouraged to explore their environment and have regular opportunities to enjoy sensory experiences. They carefully examine boxes and cartons and explore interactive toys and natural materials. From an early age, children are encouraged to develop an interest in books. They choose their favourites and cuddle up with an adult for the story to be read to them. They enjoy singing and rhymes, showing their pleasure by listening, smiling and beginning to copy relevant actions. Toddlers have space to move around and enjoy messy play activities each day. For example, they use paints to make handprints and to stamp pictures. They carefully spoon cereals into small containers, developing good hand-eye coordination. Key staff working with

the younger children have completed Birth to three matters training and are using this to guide their planning.

All children enjoy a balanced range of activities to help them to develop new skills. Older children who attend the centre before and after school are able to be independent and to make choices. They are relaxed and comfortable as they serve their cereals at breakfast time and choose where they want to play. During school holidays, they are able to participate in outings, such as visits to the cinema and sports venues. They are supported by staff who have relevant skills and experience with this age group.

Staff plan daily routines to ensure children's needs are met and to provide them with opportunities for free play and more adult led activities. They evaluate what they do and work with other professionals, such as the community teacher, to enhance the care and learning experiences they provide for children. There are times, however, when routines and resources are less well organised and inhibit children's choices. For example, free flow between Sunflowers and Treetops sometimes makes snack time difficult to manage. The organisation of resources to support children's creative play and to stimulate and challenge children in the "Potting Shed", on occasions, limits their opportunities for choice.

Children develop warm, positive relationships with the adults who care for them and learn to play cooperatively with their peers. They are well supported by kind and caring staff who interact positively with them.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage, using it successfully to develop their planning systems so as to ensure that children enjoy a broad range of activities. Children are excited and motivated to learn. They concentrate well during focused activities and also when engaged in solitary play. They begin to manage personal care well and are encouraged to become independent with routines, such as putting on their shoes and socks after playing in the sand. Children learn to show care and concern for others and seek to involve them in their play. For example, at story time they kindly offer a turn to a child who has not yet had a chance to take part.

Children are confident communicators and have many opportunities to engage in conversations. They use language well during role play to develop their own stories. They join in enthusiastically with songs and rhymes and listen intently to stories they know well. They have access to a wide range of books and use them both for enjoyment and for reference. Children enjoy a print rich environment where they see many of their own statements on display. Children develop good counting skills and become familiar with number concepts as part of daily routines and as part of planned activities. For example, they count each other while waiting to go outdoors and they confidently count the number of windows they have coloured in on their pictures of houses. They learn about shape and size, making their own shape games that they return to frequently. They develop an understanding of volume as they fill and empty containers with materials such as wood shavings and compost.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is very well promoted. They are curious about snails that they find in the garden and learn to look after the nursery's fish, sometimes visiting the local pet shop to buy food for them. They use boxes and tubes to construct a model of a person's digestive system as part of a project based on food and healthy eating. Children have easy access to equipment, such as the computer and keyboards. They use cameras to take photographs of themselves and their environment, creating interesting albums to look back on. Visitors to the setting and outings into the surrounding community help to raise children's awareness of the wider society.

Children use their imaginations as they play in role play areas and elsewhere. For example, while playing on the climbing frame they pretend they are princesses waiting to be rescued from their castle. They place chairs together to make a bus, finding resources for themselves to represent a steering wheel. They make collage pictures and do lots of cutting and sticking often as part of a focused activity. There are more limited opportunities for children to experiment freely with colour and texture as easels, paints and craft materials are not organised well enough to promote free choice.

Staff interact positively with children, using effective methods to engage them and stimulate their curiosity. They encourage children to practise new skills and reinforce expected behaviour, so that children learn to work cooperatively. There are detailed planning systems in place, which are focused on what children are intended to learn. Staff use observations, tracking sheets and learning stories well to monitor and record children's progress and to identify the next steps in their learning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging and are encouraged to make their own contributions to the nursery. They become familiar with routines and participate with enthusiasm in activities. Children's views are sought and there are many of their own statements displayed around the setting. For example, they talk with staff about what they would like to see in the garden area and their suggestions are mounted and displayed. Children are invited also to contribute to the planning of activities, so that the programme can be guided by their interests and preferences. This helps children to feel that they are valued and important.

Children's individual needs are met well. They are cared for by familiar staff who talk to parents and work closely with them and with other professionals, so that appropriate support can be given. Staff attend additional training to develop their skills in caring for children who have disabilities. They use resources effectively to help children with communication problems. For example, they use signing and picture cards so that children understand what is expected of them and what will happen next. Other children in the group also develop an understanding and acceptance of different needs and abilities.

Children learn about the wider society as they engage in many activities that help to

raise their awareness of different cultures, lifestyles and needs. For example, they participate in a disability awareness topic, which includes a visit by a nurse to talk with them about disability and to show them various aids, such as crutches and walking frames. Children celebrate a range of festivals, plan and participate in a wedding, taste different foods and enjoy visits from a steel band. They have access to many resources, including posters, books and small world figures, reflecting positive images of diversity. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Staff help children to behave well, by consistently reinforcing boundaries and reminding children of agreed rules. Children work together cooperatively as they develop imaginary games and share resources. For example, at the mark making table they ask politely if they can have a favourite colour next and understand that they need to wait their turn. They receive lots of encouragement and praise, which helps to build their self-esteem.

There is an excellent partnership with parents and a wealth of information is shared very effectively with them. Notice boards and displays are used extremely well to ensure that parents have lots of information about all aspects of the provision. They also have easy access to a varied collection of photograph albums and scrap books, showing children's involvement in events and topics. The views of parents are regularly sought by means of questionnaires. Staff communicate effectively with parents at arrival and collection times, sharing information about the child's day both verbally and in writing. Parents are able to see children's records at any time and appointments with key workers are offered, particularly before children move on to school.

The nursery provides lots of useful information for parents about the curriculum and staff find effective ways of involving them in their children's learning. For example, as part of a planned topic, they invite parents to visit the nursery in their normal working dress to talk to the children about their "uniform", and about the work that they do. Such activities provide children with many interesting learning opportunities, but also help parents to build strong links with the nursery and to be involved more directly in their children's learning experiences.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The nursery environment is well organised to promote children's welfare and safety. There is a good understanding and division of roles and responsibilities within the staff team as a whole. Effective recruitment and induction systems ensure that staff are checked, have relevant skills and understand the nursery's procedures. Staff are deployed effectively, so as to maintain continuity for children. Space and resources are organised well overall, to support children's play and learning.

There is a strong commitment within the nursery to the continuous improvement of the provision, reflected in the successful participation in the local quality assurance scheme and the renewal of the Investors in People award.



Leadership and management of the setting is good, which contributes to children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff working with the older children are well supported. For example, a qualified teacher is employed in an advisory and support role and works closely with the staff team and with children to enhance children's play and learning experiences. There are also good links with the community teacher from the local authority. The setting actively seeks feedback from parents and uses observations and tracking systems effectively, in order to monitor children's progress.

Policies and procedures are in place and implemented well, so that children's welfare is safeguarded. Required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is maintained effectively.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children attending.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, it was recommended that the manager access more advanced child protection training. Three of the senior staff have now completed this and they ensure that other staff at the nursery are familiar with the procedures to follow. This helps to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities and safeguards children's welfare.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that the provider continue to develop the outdoor play opportunities for children. Significant improvements have been made in this area, creating an exciting space in which children can enjoy a good variety of activities. There are some interesting resources, including natural materials, such as the log stepping stones, to help children to develop physical skills. Some staff have attended additional training to support their practice with regard to the planning and provision of outdoor play. The introduction of a free flow system for part of the day allows children to make choices about where they wish to play. Children's views are sought about what they would like to see in garden areas and there are plans in place to develop this further. These measures help to ensure that children benefit from opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise, which contributes to their good health.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- consider ways of making more effective use of routines and play areas to provide children with choice and challenge ( also applies to nursery education)

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- consider additional ways of promoting children's creative development

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)