



Children 4 Most at Squirrels Wood

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY225501
Inspection date	22 June 2006
Inspector	Shirley Leigh Monks-Meagher
Setting Address	Cemetery Road, Audenshaw, Manchester, M34 5AH
Telephone number	0161 336 3221
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Registered person	Children 4 Most
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Children 4 Most at Squirrels Wood Nursery has been registered since June 2003. It operates from a former Children and Family Centre; a single story building just off of the main Ashton to Denton thoroughfare.

The building houses five rooms which accommodate babies and two rooms for children aged between two and five years old. Each of the main rooms has direct access to a secure outdoor play area. Bathroom and toilet facilities are conveniently

located.

The nursery is co-managed by a qualified and experienced manager, and the co-registered providers, both of whom hold early years qualifications and teaching certificates in early years education. There is a named deputy. There is a fully qualified staff team in place, which meets the adult-child ratio. Additional trainee staff, nursery assistants and students are employed. All nursery staff have a relevant first aid certificate. Ancillary staff and an administrator are also employed. The nursery is open from 07.30 until 18.00, Monday to Friday, closing all statutory bank holidays and for one week over the Christmas and New Year period.

There are currently 87 children on-roll, 21 of whom are in receipt of early years funding. Children with additional needs are supported. The nursery holds the Investors in People award, the gold award for healthy teeth and eating and Tameside Quality Standards Framework Award. The nursery is a member of the National Day Nursery Association and has its own website for parents.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children benefit from premises that are very clean and welcoming, stringent procedures are in place for the general cleaning and clearing up after each session. Children thrive because staff follow mainly effective procedures and practices, which enable children's nutritional, physical and health needs to be met. Most babies and toddlers are able to rest and sleep according to their needs in the cots and small mattresses that are available to them. However, the daily routines in the baby suite are inconsistent in allowing children to follow individual sleep requirements. This inhibits them from following their own natural sleep patterns as part of a healthy lifestyle. Staff are able to implement appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines; this keeps the children healthy. Children are developing an excellent understanding of personal hygiene and are keen to become independent in matters of personal care. They dispense soap and wash their hands thoroughly at appropriate times, such as before handling food, after toilet and messy play. Children wipe their own noses with clean tissue and dispose of them hygienically. The consistent support and guidance offered by staff to all children enhances their understanding of good hygiene practice. Fully stocked first aid boxes are readily accessible throughout the setting and staff, who are competent to administer first aid, ensure that children's minor injuries are treated appropriately. Meticulous detail to the recording of accidents sustained and of any medication administered protects children's well-being.

Children develop and test their physical control in stimulating indoor and outdoor play experiences. Staff are knowledgeable and secure in their understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. They know the children well as individuals and this encourages children to confidently try new skills, ask for help and set their own limits within a safe environment. For example, children climb up over and through the small climbing frame, step in and out of coloured tyres and balance carefully along planks

in the soft central area.

Children's health is fostered through the provision of nutritious, balanced meals and snacks. The nursery ensures that children are offered five portions of fruit and vegetables throughout the day. Children's health and dietary needs are respected by staff who conscientiously record specific needs and allergies. Mealtimes are unhurried social occasions where staff sensitively and skilfully support children to choose and enjoy healthy foods as part of a healthy lifestyle. Children are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water to keep refreshed and hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed into the bright, colourful environment, which is maintained to a very high standard. Rooms are maintained at the optimum temperature and sufficiently ventilated to ensure children's comfort. Ample space ensures that children can play and explore in safety and comfort. The organisation and arrangement of the nursery rooms meet the needs of the children superbly as the areas are set out thoughtfully, helping to promote a range of children's skills and independence. Rooms are divided into areas and this results in children experiencing a balanced range of resources. Excellent kitchen, laundry and storage facilities contribute to the smooth running of the setting and the high quality care of the children.

The nursery is superbly equipped to promote all areas of learning. Resources are of a superior quality and include many made from natural materials. Toys and resources are organised effectively making them easily accessible to even the youngest children. They are labelled clearly with text and pictures, helping children to identify resources. Highly effective systems are in place for checking resources, thereby ensuring that they are always safe and suitable for children's use.

Staff are extremely vigilant in reducing potential hazards minimising risks of accidental injury to children. No safety issues have been identified. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken to monitor the safety of the premises and resources. The procedures in place for resolving safety matters are extremely effective. Children are cared for by vetted adults who are skilful, experienced and knowledgeable.

Children's welfare is fully safeguarded by staff who are clear that the child's welfare is their main concern. Staff have very clear knowledge and understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of concerns about a child, gained from a wealth of experience in dealing with concerns, monitoring children and referrals. The managers work closely with parents to ensure that vulnerable children receive the best care possible.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel secure, safe and contented in the nursery. There are close and affectionate relationships throughout the setting yielding a happy and harmonious environment where children thrive. High quality interaction between the adults and children results in confident children who develop a strong sense of self in an atmosphere of trust.

Staff confidently uses the Birth to three matters framework guidance to plan high quality care and education for children. They are sensitive to the children's needs and recognise them as individuals. Highly effective assessment and planning systems are used to ensure children's needs inform the learning program. Babies and toddlers enjoy a wealth of experiences and opportunities, which significantly enhance their development. For example, highly innovative sensory experiences, such as treasure baskets, texture tunnels, mirror boxes, flashing lights and interesting sounds. Babies are captivated, squeal with delight and are awestruck at their discoveries. Toddlers have a wonderful time exploring jelly; they scoop it up with spoons and squeeze it through their fingers, they taste it and rub it over their faces and in their hair. The children really enjoy rhymes and simple songs and join in enthusiastically. Stories are very popular throughout the nursery with all age-groups, and high priority is given to imaginative play and children learning to play cooperatively with one another. Babies and toddlers are making very good progress in the nursery and this is evidenced by the play that they exhibit. For example, under two's handle chunky chinks and paintbrushes with dexterity as they produce their pictures and two-year-olds competently use simple tools, such as cutters and rolling pins in the play dough and a whisk to whip up some angel delight.

Nursery Education.

Children are purposefully engaged at all times and thoroughly enjoy their play. There are a wealth of opportunities for independent learning and adult-initiated learning throughout the sessions. For example, children are able to choose to explore the arctic conditions recreated with snow and icebergs, write letters in the writing area or create textured pictures and discuss textures, shapes and colours.

Children are independent. They put on aprons, help themselves to drinks and use the toilets. During activities children demonstrate high levels of concentration and spend lengthy periods of time completing puzzles, creating pictures, mark-making and identifying sounds. Children are eager to help staff to tidy away at the end of the session. They know where items belong because everything is clearly labelled. They sweep up the bark that has fell on the floor and by cooperating successfully manage to get it onto the dustpan. Children behave well. They sit quietly at appropriate times and listen carefully to the staff. Children are developing good control of their emotions. They thoughtfully and confidently share things that make them feel happy during carpet time. Many children state that sharing and treating toys and each other with respect make them happy. They take-turns well because they recognise that when they are holding Harvey Bear it is their turn to speak. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development.

Children are able to recognise their own name and can self-register successfully when they enter in the morning. They are developing a good understanding of letter shapes and can link many to phonic sounds. Many are able to recognise letters and

sounds that appear in their names. Children understand writing as a form of communication because they have many opportunities to use writing for a purpose. For example, they write letters and cards, complete medical records and diary during role-play and write their names on work. Staff model writing well for children. There is a well stocked writing area where children sit independently. A separate, comfortable library area is well used by children who are developing a love of books and stories. They handle them carefully, retell favourite tales and share books together. Children listen attentively to group stories, enthusiastically joining in with familiar stories and predicting events. Staff provide excellent support for individuals and provide one to one support when required, enabling all children to be involved and included in the activities.

Children use number confidently. They count the number of bricks in their towers and record their findings on bar-graphs, which they display on the wall. Frequent number rhymes and games are helping children to understand simple addition and subtraction. For example, five currant buns and 12345, fish alive. They enjoy estimating how many children in their group or on the carpet and can recognise and name some simple two and three dimensional shapes. The children use shapes to make a display of a 'shape man'. Children concentrate well when sorting and matching by colour, shape and classification and explore weight, volume and capacity in practical activities, such as sand and water play.

Children explore, investigate and discover for themselves during hands-on activities. For example, they bake, explore the similarities and differences of mini-beasts and follow the seasons. Simple experiments with melting ice provoke much discussion and bring about awe and wonder on the children's faces. They develop a clear sense of time as they discuss past events and where they are going on holiday. They have a growing awareness of the wider community because visitors and parents come to the setting and talk about what they do. Children develop a good understanding of simple everyday technology. They use computers adeptly. For example, children use the directional keys on the keyboard to move Pingu through a series of tunnels and use the mouse to drag and drop objects. Children enjoy the listening centre. They select tapes, turn the recorder on and off and rewind the tape to favourite parts of the Ginger Bread Man story.

Children express their own ideas confidently in creative work using a wide variety of media. For example, textured pictures using sand, glitter, seeds, fabrics and feathers and models made from dough and conventional kits. Children are developing rhythm because they are encouraged to move their bodies imaginatively and rhythmically in regular music and movement sessions, and explore beat and sound using a varied selection of musical instruments. Children have ample opportunity to hone their imaginations; they play out situations in role-play areas, they recreate events and stories using puppets and act-out simple stories, such as the little blue star.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the early learning goals which is clearly reflected in their planning and teaching. They establish children's base line and build on what children know, understand and can do. Ongoing, thorough observation and assessment is used to inform the planning. Their skilful approach to promoting positive relationships and boosting self-esteem contributes significantly to children's rapid progress through the

stepping stones in all areas of learning. Throughout the sessions children's efforts and achievements are celebrated and praise is consistently and appropriately endowed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children significantly benefit from the strong, professional and positive partnerships that are developed with parents and carers. They are cared for by staff who work diligently with parents to meet their individual needs and ensure that they are fully included in the life of the setting. Consequently, key-workers fully understand the children's individual health, dietary, social and emotional needs and religious and cultural beliefs, and work hard to ensure that these are reflected and well catered for within the provision. Children learn about the diversity of our society through resources which portray positive, non-stereotypical images, the positive role-model of staff and as they acknowledge various celebrations and festivals.

Children are warmly greeted by staff who are interested in what they have to say, helping them to feel secure and a real sense of belonging. Samples of their work and photographs of them participating in activities are attractively displayed throughout the setting promoting their self-esteem and respect for others. They are learning to work harmoniously with others whilst enjoying the freedom to explore within appropriate boundaries. Children are learning to make informed decisions as they choose from a wide and balanced range of resources. Staff effectively support them in sharing and taking turns. For example, 'Harvey Bear' is used very successfully at carpet time to help children to understand it is their turn to speak when they are holding Harvey. Children's behaviour is admirable. They learn appropriate codes of behaviour and gently remind each other of these. Staff are exemplary role models who remain calm and positive at all times and use consistent strategies to promote acceptable behaviour. As a result of these positive approaches children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely well fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive a high level of information relating to the Foundation Stage and the educational provision via a multitude of sources. For example, the parent's brochure contains useful information on all six learning areas, regular news letters, photographic evidence linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals, and topic information with ideas on how parents can be involved in their child's learning. They are informed of their children's progress both informally and formally on a regular basis. Parents are further involved through participating in activities, such as festival celebrations and visiting the setting to talk about their jobs. A parent recently brought her new baby into nursery and gave it a bath in front of the Wise Owl children. This high quality partnership is further enhanced by involving parents in reviewing of policies and translating leaflets and letters into their first language to enable a wider audience of parents to access information. Parents of younger children are well informed about their child's daily activities and progress through the use of daily diaries and diary sheets. Parents speak very highly of the setting and staff. They find staff approachable and welcoming and many talk about how their child has thrived, made such rapid

progress, loves coming to nursery, the atmosphere and children cared for in safe environment.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children's care is significantly enhanced by the rich, varied and imaginative quality of the organisation. Highly motivated staff are very well aware of the ethos of the nursery. Their hard work and diligence clearly demonstrates their high regard for the well-being of all children. Policies and procedures are implemented thoroughly and conscientiously to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Daily routines, in most instances, are flexible enough to cater for children's individual needs.

The comprehensive operational plan ensures that staff are very clear about their roles and responsibilities, enabling children to benefit from a secure environment and continuity of care. Both the indoor and outdoor space maximises play opportunities for children. Children are cared for and well protected by well qualified staff with an in depth knowledge and understanding of child development and child protection. Meticulous records remain confidential and are easily accessible.

The leadership and management is outstanding. It enhances all aspects of children's rapid progress towards the early learning goals. Senior staff are extremely confident and self-assured and work 'hands-on' with the children. As they do so, they are effectively able to monitor the nursery provision. Staff receive clear and positive direction from the managers. Staff roles are well defined and the team work effectively together to promote learning. Thorough and effective systematic monitoring and assessment procedures ensure consistently high quality provision. The managers are highly aware of strengths and weaknesses within the provision through detailed and robust appraisal systems, and their first class commitment to improvement is reflected in a strong emphasis on staff's professional development. This positively impacts on the quality of the children's learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting were asked to keep accident and medication records confidential, keep a record of staff on the room registers and to ensure that the regulators telephone number is displayed for parents.

Staff have devised a system of individual accident and medication book for each child who attends the nursery, thus ensuring that the information is kept confidential. Staff attendance is now consistently recorded on room registers alongside the children they are caring for and thus ensuring that a clear record of whom is caring for specific children at any given time. The complaints procedure contains clear information relating to the regulator, including the telephone number, and is displayed

on the parents' notice-board. As a result of the actions taken by the setting children's wellbeing is more fully protected.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 7 (Health). A childcare inspector visited the provision on 25 November 2005. Actions were raised and satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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 outstanding.

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):

- ensure that daily routines in the baby suite are consistent and allow babies to follow their own natural sleep patterns as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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