



John McNeill Opportunity Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	145990
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Inspector	Pamela Woodhouse
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Registered person	John McNeill Opportunity Centre
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

John McNeill Opportunity Centre opened in 1979. It operates from its own premises in Salisbury, Wiltshire in three play rooms. Additional areas include a gym, sensory room and a room for parents. There is a fully enclosed outside play area. A maximum of 40 children may attend the setting at any one time which is open each week day during term time from 09:30 to 12:00. There is an optional lunch club from 12:00 to 13:00. The setting also opens occasionally during the summer holidays.

There are currently 55 children aged from birth to five years on roll. Of these, 32 receive funding for early education. Children attend from a wide catchment area including Dorset and Hampshire and mainly support children with special needs.

The setting employs 30 staff, 14 of whom have relevant early years qualifications and nine are currently working towards a qualification.

The setting receives support from education and health professionals and from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted through suitable procedures and routines which reduce the risk of the spread of infection. Staff actively promote children's understanding of hygiene through regular routines, such as hand washing after toileting and during food related activities. They also observe appropriate practices themselves which has a positive impact on children's health, for example, hygienic nappy change routines and using colour coded cloths for different tasks. Most staff have completed a suitable first aid course and others are undertaking training alongside their National Vocational training. Where appropriate, staff are also trained to administer children's medication. They draw up and use care plans in partnership with some of the children's parents to ensure that their health needs can be met appropriately. However, medical and accident records are not consistently maintained which compromises the children's welfare.

Children's dietary needs are taken into account and appropriate support is given to those children who have complex needs. Drinking water is available to the children on request and they are able to enjoy a choice of milk or water to drink during their snack times. However, snack time is not organised well, there is a lengthy preparation procedure which means that some children tire of waiting.

Children have daily opportunities to play and exercise outside in the fresh air as well as in the indoor gym, using equipment which challenges their individual abilities. All children are able to take part in exercise in some way and activities are adapted to ensure that this happens. For example, children with impaired mobility are supported by staff who roll them over and slide them down the slide. Some children are beginning to develop a sense of space and can move about with control, for example, avoiding obstacles when they ride their wheeled toys.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are clean and welcoming to the children and their parents. Posters and some examples of children's art work are displayed, which, alongside the colourful decoration, help to make a cheerful environment. There is level access to the ground floor and outdoor facilities, and a

'walking chair' is used to take some of the children up and down the stairs to the gym and sensory room. These measures ensure that children can access all areas of the building.

Children use a range of equipment and resources to ensure that their individual needs are met. For example, the use of specialist equipment and suitable chairs to meet children's specific needs to enable them to join in with their peers. Children can access some of their toys from low height trays and cupboards and staff make sure that children who have more complex needs have toys which stimulate them and are within their reach.

Suitable precautions are in place to ensure that children are kept safe and staff supervise them well at all times. They make sure that the children's environment is safe by checking this before they arrive and by being vigilant during the session. Staff also receive training in manual handling so that they know the correct and safe way to lift and carry children. Soft play surfaces outside and in the gym and sensory room mean that children can exercise and play on the floor safely and safety equipment is used to protect them from potential hazards. For example, there is a secure entry system, a barrier is fitted across the kitchen door and door handles are fitted out of the children's reach so that they cannot leave their playroom unnoticed. The mini bus is used to transport some children to and from the setting and also for outings and visits, for example, to the swimming pool. Children's safety is maintained because they each have their own seat and are appropriately secured in this; the drivers have completed approved training and escorts accompany the children on all journeys.

Children's welfare is satisfactorily safeguarded because there is a clear policy about the procedures to follow. Some staff have an understanding of child protection issues and the action they should take should they have any concerns about a child in their care. However, not all staff are clear about the procedures and lack understanding of what might be regarded as a cause for concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive at the setting happily and quickly settle into their activities and routines. They know the pattern of the session which helps them to understand what is going to happen next and their routines promote a sense of security. Children have a warm relationship with staff who know them well and give them appropriate support, for example, many of the children have one-to-one care. Staff are knowledgeable about the children's individual needs and abilities, providing suitable activities to promote their development. They make sure that those children with more complex needs are fully included and can join in with the activities. For example, children scrunch up tissue paper unaided and enjoy feeling the change in texture. Children enjoy a range of planned activities throughout the session and some attend therapeutic swimming and horse riding sessions as part of their care and play plans. However, some children are not always challenged by the activities available.

Individual play plans set out the aims for the progress of children with identified special needs, however, this system does not extend to all children. Observations and assessments are undertaken and used to monitor children's progress but these are not always used to identify and progress the next steps in their learning.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are offered a satisfactory range of activities and play experiences to support their progress towards the early learning goals. Their activities are designed for their individual level of ability, however, staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage is not secure. Consequently, some children are not always sufficiently challenged. Children are familiar with the routine of the session and choose from a pre-selected range of resources; these are sometimes limited for the oldest children because they are not able to freely access the activities happening elsewhere in the setting. Staff undertake written observations and assessments of children, however, this information is not used in planning for some of the children's future learning.

Children have some opportunities to develop their independence, for example, some children can use the toilet and wash their hands by themselves. They behave very well and some children are beginning to play cooperatively with their peers. They are able to choose from a pre-selected range of activities, however, some children are capable of being more independent than they are currently encouraged to be, for example, by helping to prepare their own snack. Children's communication skills are promoted well. Staff constantly encourage verbal communication and sign language, repeating words and signs to recap or reinforce their meaning. They reward children's responses through praise, smiles and touch. Children look at the pictures in books and some enjoy listening to stories one-to-one with an adult and in small groups, following the story keenly. Children have opportunities to draw and some are able to recognise and write their names, however, there are no opportunities for them to practise their writing skills in play situations such as in the role play area. Some children are learning to use number, for example, when counting how many are present and how many plates they need. Some children can identify basic shapes such as a triangle and circle from pictures displayed around the room and are beginning to explore size and measure, for example, they help to weigh out the ingredients when making biscuits. However, children have few chances to solve simple problems.

Children's awareness of the wider world is promoted through visits from the local ambulance, fire and police service and from specialists who show them how to care for themselves. For example, the dental hygienist visits to show the children how to brush and care for their teeth. They have opportunities to develop their awareness of culture and beliefs through activities and simple celebrations of festivals such as Christmas and Chinese New Year. Children enjoy learning about sinking and floating as they experiment with various objects in the water tray, dropping these into the tray and watching intently as they wait to see what happens. A group of children become absorbed when constructing a rocket, they work cooperatively to fix a range of boxes and tubes together and show excitement and a sense of achievement as this begins to take shape. Children can operate simple technology, some with adult support and others on their own, pushing buttons and operating toys to make them move or make sounds.

Children have creative play opportunities and some use their imagination when engaged in role play, for example, making cups of tea in the home corner. However, creative activities such as painting and collages are adult led which impacts on some children's ability to initiate and develop their own ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have formed a close bond with staff who take positive steps to ensure that they are included and valued. They adapt activities and resources to ensure that all children can take part and use specialist equipment where necessary to enable this to happen. For example, the painting activity is adapted so that all children can experience the textures of the paint and make their own picture. Children are praised for all of their achievements and these are shared with their peers so that they can join in the celebrations. Activities to introduce children to different cultures are planned, for example, Chinese New Year and Diwali and they are able to play with a range of resources which promote positive images of diversity.

Children who have identified special needs receive good support and the high staffing levels means that this can be sustained throughout each session. The special educational needs coordinators are very clear about their roles and responsibilities towards the children and for ensuring that staff have the appropriate training and knowledge to enable them to give the children good care and attention. Staff are very knowledgeable about their key children's specific needs as well as having general knowledge about the needs of others. Specialist workers such as the speech therapist work on site and give individual therapy sessions to the children, in addition, all staff are able to use sign language. As a result they are able to communicate with all children. All of the children who have special needs have individual play and care plans which are drawn up in liaison with parents, staff and other professionals involved in their development. These are reviewed regularly to ensure that amendments are made to take account of children's progress. There are many resources to stimulate the children's senses and promote their development. For example, they are able to move around on their own accord or with adult support in the indoor gym and enjoy the lights, sounds and movement in the sensory room.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff are sensitive to their level of understanding and have appropriate expectations, adopting suitable, positive strategies to discourage confrontational situations. For example, using distraction and reasoning with those children who can understand. Some children are beginning to wait their turn at snack time and follow simple instructions such as putting their shoes on when it is time to finish their session in the gym.

Children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. There is a good rapport between staff and parents who speak very highly of the provision and the support offered. They are made to feel secure in the knowledge that their children's needs are addressed well and they say that they trust staff implicitly. There is regular liaison between parents and staff about their children's learning and development, such as when drawing up care and play plans. There is also an opportunity for informal discussions to take place each day at the beginning and end of the session. Support is extended to the whole family who are welcome to use the parent room facilities. This provides a space for parents to meet to chat with each other or for time out to relax with a cup of coffee. Monthly support meetings are arranged to discuss relevant topics, for example, about behaviour management or the statementing process. The information centre within the parents room provides a mine of information to help them locate specialist services and support. Parents

receive detailed information about the provision but the complaints procedure does not inform them about how they can make a complaint to the regulator should they wish to do so.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are protected because suitable recruitment and selection procedures are in place to ensure that staff have been vetted and are suitable to be in contact with them. They benefit from individual attention which is achieved by the high adult: child ratios; this ensures that they receive the support they need to enable them to participate in all activities. There is a consistent routine to the sessions which helps children to know what will happen next and staff receive a briefing before the children arrive so that they are clear about their roles and responsibilities for that particular session. Space is used effectively to enable a varied range of activities to happen simultaneously and the children are appropriately grouped according to their age and ability. However, the oldest children do not have many opportunities to take advantage of the activities happening in the larger playroom.

The setting maintains detailed policies and procedures which are reviewed and amended from time to time to ensure that they continue to be relevant. Required documentation is in place, however, this is not consistently maintained and the complaints policy is not fully compliant with current legislation.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The management team play an active part in the setting and in providing support for the staff team who work very well together. Staff are also supportive of each other, offering assistance where appropriate, for example, when moving the children to a different activity. The management team ensure that staff have both in-house and external training opportunities to further their knowledge and there are regular meetings between them to discuss general issues. Staff are also encouraged to contribute to the planning for the Foundation Stage of learning. Plans show that children have access to a varied range of activities which are evaluated and reviewed so that they can be adapted to suit individual children. However, they are not extended to provide greater challenges to the oldest children.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to ensure that: all entries in the accident book are signed by parents; the registration system shows the times of arrival and departure of children, staff and visitors; and that heaters are safe or inaccessible to the children.

The provider has addressed these issues by amending the register to include all required information. This means that there is a full account about the number of children present on the premises at any one time. The heating system has recently been replaced and has thermostatically controlled radiators to ensure that the surfaces do not become too hot to touch.

Nursery education

At the last inspection the setting was asked to: increase the opportunities for children to freely explore a wide range of media and materials; increase the frequency of practical activities to encourage an interest in number problems; and increase the availability of resources to ensure that the needs of all children are met.

The provider has addressed these issues by ensuring that children have access to different media each day, for example, playdough, painting, collage, 3D modelling. Staff include number informally in everyday situations so that children begin to use this as a matter of course and new resources have been purchased so that there is a satisfactory range for all children to use.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and concerns
- further develop the complaints procedure so that it is fully compliant with current legislation and ensure that it is made available to parents
- make sure that all records in relation to accident and medication are regularly reviewed to ensure that sufficient detail and information is recorded

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):

- develop staff confidence and knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum

- ensure that all of the children's assessments are used to plan for the next steps in their learning
- ensure that the range of activities offer appropriate challenges to all children
- review the organisation of the session to ensure that children can experience the full range of activities (also applies to care)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk