



Elizabeth Foundation

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143465
Inspection date	30 November 2006
Inspector	Lynn Reeves
Setting Address	Southwick Hill Road, Cosham, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO6 3LL
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	The Elizabeth Foundation
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?

The Elizabeth Foundation Family Centre opened in 1981. It is a registered charity and operates from several rooms in two purpose built buildings located on the grounds of Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth. The centre serves deaf children from a wide geographical area.

The centre is registered to care for 29 children from two years to under five years at any one time. There are currently 30 children from two to five years on the roll. This includes three children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The centre also work with children from birth to two years on the site but parents attend with their children for the sessions. The group opens Monday to Friday from 09:30 until 14:30 term time only.

There are seven members of staff working with the children who work on a part and full time basis. Most hold teaching or early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Local Authority. The Elizabeth Foundation uses a Multi Sensory Oral/Aural Approach to teaching deaf children spoken language. The centre also work in partnership with Portsmouth Hospital Trust to provide a diagnostic hearing test centre for children, and also in connection with delivery of the new born hearing screening programme for the area. Counselling and support for parents cover the whole programme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines, for example, washing their hands before eating and after toileting, and use individual paper towels to dry their hands on, which help prevent the spread of germs. Staff at the setting implement stringent cleaning procedures effectively, including using anti-bacterial sprays on table tops before and after snack and meal times, wearing disposable gloves for nappy changing and ensuring that all toys and play equipment are cleaned regularly, helping to prevent the possible spread of infection.

Children are provided with a range of healthy and nutritious snacks, which include different fruits and vegetables, and try various new foods during cooking activities. Parents provide their children's lunches and are aware of the setting's policy regarding healthy eating. The staff check the contents of the lunch boxes and store foods appropriately in the fridge. Children's allergies, medical, cultural needs and parental preferences are discussed in great detail with the parents before the children attend. The details are clearly recorded on children's records and are discussed with staff to ensure they are all fully aware.

Children are kept healthy because the staff hold current first aid certificates so children can receive immediate first aid treatment in the event of an accident. All accidents are recorded in detail and parents are required to sign the records, however, confidentiality is not maintained as details of all children are all on one sheet. Written parental consent is in place for the administration of medication, however, parents' signatures are not obtained to acknowledge the entries at the end of each session on collection of their child, which impacts on children's overall safety.

Children have ample opportunities to develop their physical skills indoors, for example as they dance and sing along during music sessions using a range of musical instruments, when playing on obstacle courses and acting out the actions to familiar nursery rhymes, where they bend and stretch. Children benefit from lots of fresh air on a daily basis and have ample opportunities to develop their large muscle skills through a variety of physical activities in the well designed outdoor garden, they run and hide in the maze, play on swings, see-saws, slides and rockers. Children develop spatial awareness as they ride the sit-on-toys, scooters and bikes and negotiate obstacles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children access a clean, colourful and stimulating setting. The rooms are spacious and brightly decorated with learning posters, photographs of the children and children's own artwork and creations are displayed, valuing their achievements and providing a welcoming environment for the children and their parents. Parents are made to feel very welcome and are able to stay as long as they like on arrival and enjoy informal chats when handing over the children.

The layout of rooms is designed to allow the children to work in small and large groups, or on an individual basis with their key worker, who is always a teacher of the deaf on focused activities and assessments. The whole atmosphere is vibrant and children thrive in their surroundings as they are fully supported by enthusiastic and dedicated staff. The resources are set out around the rooms in clearly labelled low-level boxes and storage shelves. Staff organise areas for messy play, music, quiet areas and physical play and rotate the equipment used during free-play, so the children can access them independently. Children are supported exceptionally well in everything they do, as high adult; child ratios are maintained and where they are able to access the resources and use the different equipment and materials.

Children are safe and secure because the staff are vigilant and carry out daily risk assessments, checking the cleanliness and safety of the premises, equipment and resources. Children learn how to stay safe throughout the day as they are reminded to sit on the chairs properly and through incidental opportunities, for example, staff explain that the Christmas lights on the tree could get hot and that they shouldn't be touched. Procedures are in place to check the fire alarms regularly and children practise fire drills, however, evacuations are not recorded or evaluated to ensure children's overall safety.

Children are well protected because all the staff have an exceptionally clear understanding of child protection procedures. All of the staff have completed child protection training to ensure their knowledge and understanding of the procedures is up-to-date and correct. Procedures are in place to ensure that any injury a child attends with is recorded and signed by parents to ensure children are protected from harm or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very well settled, have high levels of self-esteem and enjoy their time at the setting. They achieve well because the staff have an extremely clear understanding of the Foundation Stage, Birth to three matters and use a multi sensory oral approach to enhance children's learning. Children arrive full of excitement and eager to participate. The staff greet all the children and their families warmly, helping to make them feel welcome and relaxed in the setting. Children benefit greatly from the overall enthusiasm of the staff, the stimulating environment and innovative range of activities, which meet the children's individual needs. Children express their ideas as they join in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences. They form very strong relationships with the staff increasing their sense of trust.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which enhances the quality of care deaf children receive. They use open ended questions to make children think and adapt techniques according to the age and ability of the child. All children are eager to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences, for example, making angels with ice cream, wafers, raisins and icing. Staff implement a varied range of teaching methods to introduce an exciting range of activities and experiences, they communicate with the children via head sets, linked to a Soundfield system, hearing aids and through visual gestures. This enables the children to make rapid progress from their own starting points towards the early learning goals. Each area of learning is incorporated into the curriculum planning and the activities are purposeful and pitched at each child's level, enabling them to gain a real sense of achievement.

Staff give their full attention to the children throughout the sessions and are extremely focused, assisting and encouraging the children with high levels of skill and commitment. The staff are highly motivated and dynamic, delivering the curriculum with enthusiasm, encouraging the children to have fun and enjoy the activities. The curriculum planning for each session is meticulous, it encompasses the children's individual stage of development and is targeted to specifically meet their needs. Staff make the most of incidental learning opportunity that arises, for example as a child notices some Christmas bells hanging from the ceiling, all the children are encouraged to sing "Jingle Bells".

Children respond well to different experiences and are able to express a range of feelings, communicating with each other, for example, as a child notices that the leaves are blowing on the trees, he tells everyone its windy outside. Children concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate, for example at registration, during story telling and when listening to instructions. The staff sit with the children supporting them and assisting them as necessary. Children's spoken language is developing well as they say hello to everyone sitting at registration, they recognise photographs of themselves and others and then talk about the day, month and weather. Children listen and respond well to stories as the teacher reads "The Nativity" story, children look at the pictures and predict what's going to happen next, then dress up in costumes relating to the story. They practise their writing skills as they use markers on the white boards and use tracing paper to learn their letters and copy their names. The excellent use of visual symbols, clearly labelled resources and simple sign enable children to fully participate and make very good progress.

Children have many opportunities to develop their understanding of size and shape during practical activities and incidental opportunities, for example, they talk about the shapes of the angel wings and the halo and recognise that some children are bigger and smaller when sitting in a group. They count how many children are sitting in a circle, how many plates are needed for snack and how many lights are on the Christmas tree. They practice adding and subtracting when they use a vast range of puzzles, bricks, match and sort games and care bears.

Children learn about themselves and their families through discussion, looking at photographs and topic work. They acquire knowledge of their environment through outings to various places and seeing a range of visitors to the setting. They use everyday technology, for example, telephones, magnifying glasses, scales, irons and tills in role-play and have access to computers, which supports their learning. Children use their imagination well as they dress up in different

costumes, for example, an angel and a shepherd, they look in the mirror and laugh with excitement. Children use a range of tools to build and construct, which help develop their co-ordination and muscle control, such as rolling pins, cutters, scissors, glue sticks and paint brushes. They enjoy a range of media, such as water, sand, pasta, glue, play-dough and cooking ingredients. Children delight when singing favourite songs and nursery rhymes, for example, 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' and 'Santa got stuck up the chimney'. They use their fingers and bodies to act out the actions, they listen to music and play with range of musical instruments.

Staff work very well as a team suggesting new ideas and methods for the planning and monitoring the children in a variety of ways to identify individual targets for children to work towards. This flexible approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff recognise the group's own strengths and weaknesses and provide a curriculum which meets the needs and abilities of the children, this ensures children are able to achieve their full potential.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued as individuals and receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff, which help them to settle and develop high levels of self-esteem. Children are confident and have a very positive attitude toward themselves and one another and recognise the need to share and take turns when involving themselves in each other's play. Children are actively encouraged to work with each other, praising and recognising everyone's achievements; for example, during circle time when they sing the hello song and recognise pictures of each other on the board, they clap each other, developing a real sense of belonging and pride. Children are valued and treated as unique individuals, as the staff get to know them all extremely well. Staff are aware that children are visual learners not auditory and adapt activities and daily routines to meet their individual needs. Each child's needs are discussed and recorded in great detail, ensuring everyone is aware of their needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The staff manage the children's behaviour with consistency and calmness. They are extremely positive role-models and praise and encourage the children throughout the day. Children are very well behaved and begin to understand right from wrong through the sensitive methods used by staff, for example, clear instructions and explanations, praise and encouragement and gentle reminders to share.

Children develop an understanding of the wider world through playing with resources and equipment that reflect diversity, for example, ethnic figures, dressing up clothes, puzzles, posters and photographs displayed around the rooms. Children also access a woodland area in the garden where they can see the different changes in the plants and trees, they collect leaves, search for bugs and plant seeds. Planned activities, for example, all about us and people who help us, like the lollipop man, ambulance crew, policemen, nurses and visits to the fire station, enhance their learning.

Comprehensive procedures and detailed policies are in place, they are shared openly with the parents and are implemented effectively. The ethos of the setting is to offer guidance,

encouragement and education, and is geared towards meeting the needs of the individual children who attend and to support their parents. This builds exceedingly strong relationships with the parents and extremely effective links with other agencies to support the deaf children who attend.

Children benefit from the effective relationships between the parents and the whole centre. Information is shared freely and openly, enabling everyone to support the children in the best possible way. Parents receive comprehensive information, including newsletters and leaflets, and the notice board is used well to keep them fully up-to-date with the setting's events, changes to policies and general news. The staff spend a great deal of time with each child and their parents to find out about their needs, abilities and level of hearing loss. Medical needs and parental preferences are discussed in depth and all information is gathered in each child's file for later use.

The partnership with parents of children who receive funding for nursery education is outstanding. Parents receive a comprehensive prospectus and information pack which covers the setting and the nursery education curriculum, ensuring they are fully aware of the group's aims and objectives. Parents have opportunities to meet together formally with the key workers to develop the child's next individual education plan, which includes the entire programme of the centre and the Foundation Stage. Parents are extremely well informed about their children's progress, they have access to their child's records at any time and they are able to make written or verbal comments which are later added to their children's file. Children's learning is significantly enhanced by the contributions parents make.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and learning is enhanced by the effective deployment and high ratios maintained by staff. Everything in the setting from daily routines to the length of activities are tailor made to suit every single child. The strong relationships built between the children, staff and their parents, help each child to feel safe during their time at the setting. Therefore, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Sessions run smoothly and flow extremely well because all the staff know exactly what they are doing; including the need of each child, the aim of each activity and what will happen next. They continually communicate with the children via head sets, linked to a Soundfield system and hearing aids, through visual gestures and lip reading so children know what to expect next. Children are protected as paperwork and legally required documentation is maintained and stored securely in the office area, although some details are missing.

The leadership and management of the setting is outstanding. The management provide extremely strong support for all staff. Clear roles and responsibilities are defined, building effective and efficient relationships benefiting the children and their families. The day to day manager and the management continually review and monitor practice throughout the setting via annual appraisals, observations, weekly meetings and identifying training needs.

The policies and procedures are reviewed annually and reflect the guidelines and regulations effectively. The staff monitor and evaluate the daily routines and activities, amending and adapting practice as necessary to ensure the aims of the activities are met fully. The entire staff team, parents and the board are extremely committed to the work of the setting. The Elizabeth Foundation is committed to the "Multi Sensory Oral/Aural Approach". They are proud of their achievements and continually strive to improve the quality of care and education for all deaf children. As a result, children are happy, confident, motivated learners and are able to achieve their full potential.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to ensure the attendance register is completed on child's arrival and ensure appropriate confidentiality is observed in the incident book regarding injuries children arrive with. Since the last inspection the provider has introduced registers into the classrooms to monitor children's arrival and departure times and has implemented a new procedure to maintain confidentiality in the incident records. This ensures children's health and safety is promoted.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was to provide opportunities to extend more able children. Since the last inspection the provider has re-organised sessions so that more able children are given specific goals and independence, particularly during the term before they start school.

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.

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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 appropriate confidentiality is maintained in the accident books

- ensure parents sign the records to acknowledge that medication has been administered
- introduce a fire log book to ensure that records clearly show when evacuations have been completed and evaluated

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 *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