



Sure Start Links 4 Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY285066 |
| Inspection date | 12 February 2007 |
| Inspector | Jill Lee |
| Setting Address | Thornton Lodge Nursery School, Dryclough Road, Crosland Moor, Huddersfield, HD4 5HX |
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| Registered person | Thornton Lodge Nursery School |
| Type of inspection | Childcare |
| Type of care | Full day care, Crèche |

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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sure Start Links 4 Children's Centre, incorporating Thornton Lodge Nursery School, is part of a neighbourhood nursery initiative managed by a multi agency committee. It opened in 2004 and operates from the Sure Start building in the grounds of Crosland Moor Junior School and Dryclough Infants School in Crosland Moor, near Huddersfield.

Health professionals from within the wider community offer advice, information and drop-in sessions. Groups include a young parents' group, handling children's behaviour sessions and a 'time out' group. The Busy Bees parent and toddler group is organised weekly; this is run by a parents' committee, who have responsibility for fundraising. All parents using the centre have access to the book library. They can access infant massage classes, 'baby bop' time and dance and movement sessions. Shared parent and child activity sessions are planned, like 'big cook, little cook'.

A maximum of 52 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 49 weeks of the year. Children are grouped in three main playrooms. Babies are cared for in one room and children over two years, receiving day care in the centre, are cared for together with the Thornton Lodge Nursery annexe foundation stage class. Nursery education is provided within the centre, but is the responsibility of Thornton Lodge Nursery school. Another room is used as a crèche base to support training and other group activities for parents within the centre. Crèche children are, wherever possible, integrated into the main nursery activities. All children share access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area. There is a separate outdoor play area for children aged under two years.

There are currently 37 children aged from three months to under 5 years on roll; of these, seven children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 staff, all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have a wide and varied range of experiences in the fresh air, as they enjoy daily activities outdoors, whatever the weather. They put on raincoats and Wellington boots when it is raining and find the umbrellas. They love riding bikes and scooters and successfully negotiate obstacles, as they transport each other on the trailers. Their imagination is stimulated well as they use large blocks and crates to build structures for climbing and outdoor role play. They jump off and land confidently on the soft play surface. They balance carefully along the stepping stones and tyres and hold carefully on the railings as they climb along the low wall. They have collected lots of wood and twigs blown from trees in the wind and are making their own shelter against the wall.

Children skilfully use a wide range of equipment. Staff plan a wide and stimulating range of activities, which offer excellent opportunities for children to explore new challenges. Staff supervise children closely, but do not intervene unless children ask, encouraging children to have confidence and trust in their own abilities. Physical play is well planned to help children develop coordination and control and to move in varied and imaginative ways, using dance and music. Babies have opportunities to climb, bounce on the trampoline and to clamber on the soft play resources. They are developing a healthy independence and feel secure because staff stay very close. Toddlers have sturdy toys to push along to support their developing mobility and staff provide many opportunities for them to extend their physical skills.

Children are cared for in a bright and welcoming environment, which is clean and well maintained. Staff clearly recognise the importance of health and hygiene guidelines and implement them systematically. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication mostly meet requirements and effectively protect children. A review of medication recording is being undertaken, as it is not currently sufficiently systematic. Staff consistently promote and encourage clear health and hygiene routines within everyday practice, so that children learn

how to keep themselves healthy. They are reminded to wash their hands before they decide to have their snack and become increasingly independent in attending to their own personal care.

Parents' wishes are fully considered so that children's individual health and dietary needs are met. The nursery works closely with parents and children to promote awareness of healthy eating. Displays in the centre about healthy eating encourage everyone to think about how important it is to be well nourished. Children enjoy a freshly cooked and nutritious lunch each day. They are encouraged to serve themselves and to try new tastes and textures of food. They are introduced to a variety of different fruits and vegetables at snack time. Snack and lunch times are highly enjoyable and relaxed occasions, where staff and children sit together to eat, sociably sharing conversation. Children are offered drinks frequently and older children can access drinks independently. They sometimes shop for and help prepare snacks.

Key staff liaise very closely with parents, so that they are very alert and responsive to individual development needs. They ensure rest and sleep routines flow with the child's needs. All children are made to feel very special, as they enjoy close interactions with well known staff. As parents feel very secure and confident in using the centre, this helps promote the development of children's self-assurance and self-esteem. The range of services and activities in the centre strongly helps to promote children's overall awareness of the importance of healthy eating and the value of physical exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's understanding of safety is strongly promoted because staff discuss limits and boundaries with them within everyday activities. They are cared for in an environment where staff very confidently balance freedom and safe limits, so that children develop high levels of independence. Staff routinely reinforce safe practice, like mopping up spilt water around the water tray, sweeping up sand and not running indoors. Consistent reminders about safety rules, together with careful supervision, help children begin to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. For example, they are reminded that it is safer to climb only on the lower wall.

Children learn to use the large and well planned space purposefully. Staff enable them to access all areas of the environment, including the outdoors, with safety and independence. A well considered range of good quality resources is stored at child height, so that children can select them without help. Practice is consistently monitored and evaluated to increase all children's safe and independent participation in everyday activities. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised as staff conduct clear risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. There are clear security measures in place to ensure children's safety in a very busy building.

Children are cared for by staff, who give high priority to protecting children and keeping them safe. Staff enable children to feel confident to share their feelings and make their needs known. They sensitively establish very supportive relationships with parents. They work in conjunction with Sure Start to provide support for families, like the 'time out' crèche. There is a designated child protection coordinator, but arrangements in their absence are not sufficiently clearly defined. There is planning in place to link staff to training, to ensure they update their awareness

of child protection issues and are familiar with current guidance. The child protection policy does not clearly reflect current guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children love coming to the centre, where they are very settled and secure. They develop high levels of self confidence and independence, as they plan their own play. Staff interact very unobtrusively with children, inspiring their interest and enthusiasm. They show interest in what they do and listen closely to them, asking questions and offering suggestions. They liaise very closely with centre crèche staff, so that integration into the nursery, of children attending the crèche, is fully appropriate to the individual needs of both nursery and crèche children.

Staff plan a richly stimulating environment using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning clearly identifies the focus of learning, learning styles and enhancements of activities, the adult role and parent involvement. Staff routinely observe children as they play and are in the process of developing clearer systems to record and track their progress. They are enhancing opportunities for all staff to attend planning meetings and to share information about children, so that planning for the next steps in learning is more closely based on observations of their play, reflecting their current interests.

Children learn to share and cooperate well, involving others in their games. They are confident communicators, happily sharing their own ideas and experiences. They enjoy stories and are able to listen attentively. They experiment freely with different media and develop their own ideas, as they explore with sand, water, paint and dough. Their independent creativity is nurtured as they make collage pictures and explore different ways of using colours with the paints. They mix their own play dough and relish feeling its 'squidgy' texture as they knead and roll. They make it into a pretend birthday cake with candles for their friend. They explore size and shape in the construction area, as they concentrate for long periods constructing models, making large enclosures and developing extended imaginary small world play. They proudly show everyone the tall tower they have built, even taller than themselves. They love making huge structures outdoors. Children are encouraged to be interested in change and the world around them, as they explore many natural materials, observe creatures outdoors and grow their own plants. They collected lots of natural resources to make an 'autumn structure'. Children's imagination and creativity is fostered in many ways, for example, as they develop their own 'stories' in role play and make music to express their feelings.

Babies and toddlers enjoy lots of cuddles and physical closeness. They are very secure and play contentedly, learning to enjoy being with others. They explore richly varied treasure baskets and heuristic play, which stimulate their senses and curiosity. Staff respond intuitively and sensitively to non-verbal communications, showing a high degree of respect for children's individuality. Babies' and toddlers' learning experiences are enriched as staff observe children closely and talk frequently with parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very warmly welcomed into the inviting nursery environment. They develop a strong sense of belonging as they get to know staff well and become familiar with routines. Support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities is well considered and the sensory room provides space for relaxation, gentle stimulation and being calm. Children are cared for by familiar and well known staff, so that they develop secure and trusting relationships. They are very confident and have high self-esteem.

Children learn to be kind and polite as staff gently and very consistently reinforce rules and boundaries. Their good behaviour is sensitively supported and individual feelings respected. They learn to keep the play environment tidy, to share, take turns and think about others. Staff very clearly explain why certain behaviour is unacceptable so that children feel safe and know staff will help them to resolve any difficulties. They begin to be able to negotiate and manage any difficulties independently. The session is organised to minimise disruptions to children's play.

Children learn about different faiths, beliefs and lifestyles, as they engage in activities which reflect their local community and wider world. For example, they made 'shiny' cards for Eid and invited parents to listen to songs they had learned about the festivals. Signs in the nursery reflect community languages and well displayed posters show images of other cultures and scripts. Children's awareness of their local community is promoted, for example, by outings to the local park, the library or to the shops. Staff very successfully create a participative environment in which children make lots of choices and decisions. They learn to express their own needs and preferences and actively contribute to their own experiences within everyday routines.

Staff establish a relaxed and supportive partnership with parents and carers, which promotes children's sense of security. Parents are encouraged to spend time settling their child in nursery, so they get to know staff well. Staff work very hard to promote effective communication with parents, in their own community language, to ensure consistency with home. Parents are confident to raise any concerns. There is a clear complaints procedure, which is displayed for parents, but the details of the regulator are out of date and the Ofsted poster for parents is not displayed. The complaints record could not be located for inspection. Staff were not fully familiar with new guidelines relating to managing complaints.

Staff talk through policies and procedures with parents and share information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents communicate informally with staff on a daily basis, to ensure they are well informed about progress. They can access their child's development records at any time and photographs are used well to give parents insight into their child's experiences. Monthly newsletters keep parents updated about nursery issues and encourage parents' involvement in their child's learning. The centre is very busy and well used by significant numbers of local parents, who value the range of services and development opportunities offered. They are consistently consulted and asked to offer their views on the effectiveness of the activities offered by the centre.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery environment is very well organised to promote children's welfare and safety. Daily routines are clearly planned and flexibly implemented to respond to children's varying needs and interests. Staff are deployed very effectively to ensure appropriate levels of care and supervision and they sensitively support and follow children's interests. Staff liaise very closely with Sure Start workers, crèche staff and other professionals to ensure services offered by the centre link appropriately with issues identified by local parents, so that there is clear planning to promote children's overall well-being.

Space and resources are organised to promote children's independent participation. The staff team is strong and cohesive. They are developing a very effective approach to shared reflective practice. Systematic opportunities for self-evaluation are helping them to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement. Well planned observations of children help staff to understand children's interests and they are developing clearer systems to plan for progress. Children's experiences are significantly enhanced by well planned access for staff to appropriate training and development opportunities.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are effectively implemented, so that children's welfare is safeguarded. Recruitment procedures are robust, ensuring that staff are suitably skilled and experienced to work with children. Well planned induction procedures, together with ongoing staff monitoring and appraisal, ensure staff are able to support children's individual needs. Most required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place, some of which is in process of review. Parents' wishes regarding their child's care clearly influence day-to-day practice and clear written agreements are recorded.

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 centre was asked to improve the documentation for accidents to ensure all elements are always recorded and to ensure parent's acknowledgement is gained for any medication administered. They were asked to review risk assessments, with particular regard to the outdoor play area, and to review the child protection statement to ensure the correct contact numbers are held and obtain the government guidance 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'. They were also asked to improve the systems to observe and record what children do and use the observations to plan the next steps for the children's play, learning and development.

Accidents are now clearly recorded and monitored in the centre to ensure children's ongoing safety. Risk assessments are clearly in place to help minimise children's risk of accidental injury and to promote children's opportunity to enjoy physical challenge with safety. The child protection policy is still being updated to reflect current guidance. There are plans in place to ensure all staff are familiar with their roles and responsibilities within child protection procedures, to ensure children's welfare is fully safeguarded.

Staff routinely observe children's play and are in the process of developing clearer systems to record these observations and to use them to enable more effective planning of next steps in children's learning. This is helping staff to reflect children's interests within planning.

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

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.

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):

- complete the current review of medication recording, to ensure that a clear record is always kept when any medication is given and that parents countersign the record
- ensure that the child protection policy and procedures clearly reflect current guidance and that all staff access appropriate training to update awareness of their roles and responsibilities within them
- update the complaints procedure to reflect current guidance and develop a clear system for recording of complaints, in line with regulations.

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