



Parklands Children's Centre + Creche

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	22 February 2007
Inspector	Abigail Caroline Cunningham / Alison Margaret Walker
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Registered person	Leeds City Council - Early Years Service
Type of inspection	Integrated
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 AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. 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?

Parklands Children's Centre opened in 1998 and is one of many Children's Centres run by Leeds City Council. It is situated in the Seacroft area of Leeds. It operates on the site of Parklands Primary School and consists of a full day care nursery and crèche. In addition to the childcare facilities, it offers the local community a base for other groups to meet and support families. The nursery and crèche operate from the family play room, the studio, nursery one and nursery two. The children have access to two outdoor play areas.

The centre is open for 52 weeks of the year apart from Bank Holidays and provides: full day care; a crèche to support parents and carers attending the centre; and a variety of drop-in support groups for parents, carers and their families. A maximum of 85 children aged nought to eight years can attend the centre at any one time. There are currently 68 children aged from 20 months to under four years on roll. Of these, 50 children receive funding for nursery

education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and are drawn from the local area and wider community. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There is an overall centre manager who is supported by a management team which includes: the deputy manager; the children's centre teacher; the family outreach worker; and two senior nursery officers. The children's centre employs 27 staff and most of the staff, including the nursery manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting also receives support from the local authority and the emphasis is on learning through play.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The centre is exceptionally clean throughout and there are excellent hygiene practises in place. Very successful methods for promoting personal hygiene are used, for example, there is liquid soap and paper towels available in the toilets, the provision of individual flannels, the use of different coloured cloths for cleaning different areas and staff wear aprons and disposable gloves during nappy changing. The staff are very good role models; they wash their hands after toileting, nappy changing and before serving food. The children are encouraged to wash their hands after toileting, messy activities and before eating and understand the reasons why. More able children know the routines for hand washing very well and do this independently. They are also clearly aware of their own needs such as accessing the toilet independently, getting tissues to blow their noses and disposing of them appropriately in a lidded bin.

All staff are fully aware of the individual dietary requirements and preferences in full discussion with parents. There is a very high emphasis on healthy eating. Meals are wholesome and a wide range of fresh fruit is readily available and children help themselves to this regularly throughout the day. Meal times are an extremely sociable event. The staff sit and eat with the children and they chat together about what activities they have enjoyed, their favourite food and what they may have for their tea tonight. The children are very articulate in using knives, forks and spoons. One child proudly shows how they can eat peas with a fork. The children enjoy their food very much and confidently help themselves to second helpings. They are self motivated and help themselves to drinks from their individual cups with their own picture on. Additional sessions provide parents with practical advice and first hand experience of buying and preparing healthy, nutritious and low-cost meals. These sessions are very popular and well attended. The centre also provides a wholesale fruit and vegetable stall once a week which actively contributes to the children and their families' health and well-being.

Very effective arrangements are in place for administering first aid and medication, there are fully stocked first aid kits available throughout the centre. Clear, concise written policies are in place regarding sickness, accidents and administration of medication. These are fully implemented and shared with all parents, in particular at home visits.

The children have excellent opportunities for fresh air and outdoor play on a daily basis. They can access the outdoor play areas independently when they choose. They happily and confidently

put on their outdoor clothes and boots. They play in the rain, sweeping a puddle with child sized brushes and running and climbing freely in the woodland area. All children are highly motivated; they explore their immediate environment, objects and feelings through their senses. This is because the staff are highly skilled in encouraging the children to enjoy repetition in their movement, language, music and other sensory experiences. For example, in the movement areas where they can roll, have the freedom to explore the use of their bodies, relax and listen to music. In addition, excellent and imaginative use of the very well resourced studio promotes the importance of exercise and being healthy with the children and their parents. A recent and very successful activity in the studio involved children accessing various resources and exploring their feelings.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The environment is exceptionally warm and welcoming to children and adults. Vibrant displays and photographs throughout the centre fully reflect what it is like to be a child in this setting. Parents, children and visitors are warmly greeted by enthusiastic staff on arrival. The reception areas are very informative, for example, the settings policies and procedures, registration certificate and useful leaflets for parents are on display. Space is used very imaginatively and effectively, each playroom is extremely well organised, providing a very rich and varied environment for children. For example, heuristic, sensory and movement areas. All areas are exceptional well resourced with high quality products many made of natural materials.

There is an outstanding range of toys, furniture and equipment available, which meets the needs of all children attending, for example, cots and low-chairs. Toys and resources are in excellent condition and are regularly cleaned and checked. Staff use toys, equipment and materials effectively to ensure children are provided with an exceptional range of activities that promote children's learning in all areas. There are very comfortable areas for staff to sit with the children for a cuddle or a story. The outside areas are superb. They have been designed to make them very attractive and inviting to children, encouraging them to explore and be creative.

Safety within the setting is exemplary. All areas are extremely safe, such as sockets are covered, heating is protected, secure door entry system, dual handles on all doors and finger guards. The staff have a high level of awareness of all risks to children's health and safety. They implement rigorous systems to assess risks to ensure all areas are safe. A thorough check is carried out daily on the outside areas before the children play out. Fire drills are done on a regular basis in conjunction with the school. The staff are fully aware of procedures to follow to safeguard children. They are fully conversant with the setting's child protection policy and how to implement it.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The staff have done training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They have excellent understanding of how to implement the framework and do this very successfully. The staff provide the children with positive role models which encourages them to communicate very

well with one another. For example, they learn their friend's names and know how old they are. Children consistently enjoy attention and being physically close to other children and familiar adults. For example, a child cuddles up to a member of staff when being read a story and another greets their friend with a hug on arrival. Children are given excellent opportunities to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas. In the heuristic room, a member of staff encourages a child to explain how the coins feel on their feet; the child says 'they feel cold'. The planning and assessment systems are robust for this age group. They clearly show what stage the children are at, their individual achievements and interests. Their profiles give an excellent reflection of each individual child's time at the centre. These are done in the form of a diary with photographs. They are presented very attractively in plain English which encourages parents to look at them and contribute to them, for example, by bringing photographs in from home.

Activities are very well organised and highly innovative. Children are involved in an outstanding range of activities both inside and in the outdoor areas. A group of younger children choose to sit together and they very competently roll and cut out dough. They are very confident and imaginative in their play. One child makes a pizza putting coloured shapes on the top for the vegetables and another child makes a cake and goes on to put it in the play oven using oven gloves. A very broad range of activities is provided which develop children's knowledge and understanding in a very exciting and interesting way. They are presented to give the children optimum challenge inspiring them to be creative, imaginative and take risks in a safe environment. Children take great delight in making large models out of cardboard boxes and proudly show their parents when they arrive. Children select different outfits to play outside and run around freely pretending to be a super hero.

The staff are highly motivated and their enthusiasm inspires the children in their play. The children are very confident in the setting and enjoy learning and being challenged. One child demonstrates simple calculating skills whilst playing in the home corner with play food. Another child proudly counts to 10 and is able to recognise the numbers in written form. Children use large and small equipment extremely well. Older children skilfully use scissors, pens, pencils, paint brushes and effectively sweep water with a sweeping brush. Children use their bodies to create different effects, such as spinning around to wrap themselves up in a voile curtain. All children relate and play very well with their peers. They are extremely happy, settled and confident. They socialise very well, they are confident communicators and take a keen interest in visitors.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teaching is consistently inspiring and challenging for all children and excellent photographic evidence demonstrating this is available to view throughout the setting. The activities and experiences provided are exceptionally well matched to children's needs and interests, for example, staff effectively recognised that one child was currently working on enclosure schema, and therefore provided more opportunities to extend this throughout the various areas of provision. Teaching is rooted in expert knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn and develop. Varied, exciting and innovative teaching methods are implemented, for example, the staff are currently piloting the early years foundation stage. Relationships are excellent, all the staff work directly with the children and know the children and their families extremely well. Teaching highly motivates

children so they are engrossed in their activities and make very rapid progress, such as a recent projects on light, dark and shadow and also exploring feelings. Assessment is rigorous, it clearly shows the children's progress, achievements and interests and the information gained is used very effectively to guide planning.

Activities and experiences for all children are rich, varied and imaginative and meet the needs of individual children exceedingly well. Practitioners are extremely skilled and sensitive in their management of children and their behaviour. They provide a highly stimulating and welcoming environment which fully reflects the children's backgrounds and the wider community. They consistently make excellent use of their time and resources to support children's learning. Continual and rigorous monitoring procedures enable practitioners to maintain the high standards of teaching. Overall, children make outstanding progress in their learning and have excellent levels of achievement given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The children flourish in the setting and display very high levels of involvement in all activities, such as playing in the movement area and sweeping up the puddle in the outside play area. The children are extremely motivated and interested in learning, for example, while looking at light, dark and shadows in the studio. All children separate from their main career with confidence and are able to express their needs, feeling and preferences. They children are very friendly, they are forming excellent relationships with adults and peers, for example, one child introduced himself and his friends and explained that, 'these are my mates'. The children are very well behaved, they can use manners, share and take turns. The children recognise and are proud of their achievements, for example, one child asked a member of staff to take a photograph of the model they have made and helped them to put this photograph in their development record. The children select and use resources independently in all areas, for example, a group of children made a cave in the construction area, using large blocks and material. They can also dress and undress independently, such as they take their shoes off prior to entering the movement area and put outside shoes and coats on prior to going out to play. The children have access to an impressive range of resources which show positive images, such as empathy dolls, displays, jigsaws, books, dressing up, cooking utensils and small world play figures. Children learn effectively about the local community through visits from the fire service, police and dental hygienist.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents have excellent opportunities to share what they know about their child through regular discussions with staff, formal meetings and an effective settling in procedure, such as a home visit. Staff give excellent attention to meeting all the children's individual needs and exchanging this information with parents. Additionally the various notice boards throughout the building prominently display relevant information, such as staff photographs and information regarding the children's achievements and experiences while using the centre. Further information is available through the setting's policy files which are easily accessible to parents. The parents receive very clear information about the educational provision, through discussions with staff, notice boards and involvement in activities, such as the art group. They are very much welcomed into the centre and inspired

to be involved in their child's learning. For example, they confidently access their child's assessment records and add photographs and comments to these. Additionally, there is an open door policy and parents can stay and play with their children and are able to participate in the various support groups within the centre, such as the art group.

The staff team are very experienced in identifying and working with children with learning difficulties and disabilities and have a wealth of knowledge. As a result, the centre has very effective procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The staff team are committed to working in partnership with parents and outside agencies to ensure children receive excellent support, for example, the setting is working as part of a local inclusion project. The staff utilise space and equipment within the setting very well and activities are adapted to enable all children to take part. Very positive steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of each child, such as a special needs nursery nurse is employed. Individual education plans are fully implemented and the activities encourage the children's confidence and independence in all areas of development. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation. The senior management team and the staff have created an extremely purposeful environment in which to care for the children. Staffing ratios are consistently high and as a result, the children are given excellent support and encouragement. The staff team consistently work exceptionally well as a team; they are dynamic, dedicated, innovative, motivated, enthusiastic and committed to improvement. For example, the setting are currently completing the Leeds Quality Assurance scheme and an Inclusion Charter Mark. They are fully involved in planning, evaluating and developing practice, for example, through staff meetings, planning meetings and supervisions. Staff have regular access to purposeful training, such as integrating childminders, introduction to the early years foundation stage, listening and responding to children and linked inclusion training. All policies and procedures are individual to the setting, robust and fully support the expert practice of knowledgeable and highly skilled practitioners who consistently give utmost priority to protecting all children, promoting their well-being and supporting all to develop their potential.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are outstanding. The Children's Centre teacher provides leadership that is extremely forward thinking. She has a highly valued understanding of how to organise and manage both staff and resources to provide rich educational experiences for children. For example, she has a reflective approach and works very much hands on with the staff and children to improve practice. Planning is thorough and clearly reflects the continuous provision, the different areas of learning and responds to individual children's needs and interests. The system is easy to follow, and all staff working with the funded children know how each part fits together. The system for assessing and recording children's learning accurately identify children's learning and new work to be planned. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

The provision of additional services is a strength of the children's centre. There is an extensive selection of groups available, involving parents and children and members of the community,

which includes: a midwife drop in clinic; a book lending library; a low-cost fruit and vegetable stall; happy eaters group; get crafty group; parents and toddler groups; a counselling service; complimentary health; and various other support groups. Excellent use is made of the expertise within the staff team; they work jointly with other professionals both within the centre and out in the local community. The additional services are well established and staff work closely with health, social services and other professionals, enhancing the children's health, care and well-being.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last care and nursery education inspection the setting has strengthened partnership with parents. The settings complaints procedure and operational plan is displayed in the entrance and is easily accessible to parents. There are various display boards throughout the building, providing parents with clear information regarding various aspects of the nursery curriculum. A comprehensive record of visitors to the setting is kept, which includes times of arrival and departure, which has improved organisation.

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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The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. 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

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

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