

Doreen Hamilton Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

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Registered person	Leeds City Council
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Doreen Hamilton Early Years Centre opened in 1989. It is situated in Osmondthorpe, an inner city suburb of Leeds. It operates from four nursery rooms, a central area and a community room. A maximum of 60 children may attend the centre at any one time. The centre is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all the year round. There are two enclosed play areas.

There are currently 50 children on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education and eight receive the pilot funding for two year olds. Children attend from the local area. The centre supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The centre employs 11 staff, including eight childcare staff, a supervisory teacher, two cooks, plus a manager and an assistant manager. All except two of the childcare staff hold recognised early years qualifications and one member of staff is about to complete a recognised course, whilst the remaining member of staff intends to begin a suitable course later this year.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted as the staff follow good hygiene routines. For instance, tables are cleaned with sterilising fluid and clothes are washed separately from towels. In addition, the children have individual bedding, stored in their own personal drawers, which is washed at least weekly and more if necessary. The children are encouraged and know to wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before eating and after going to the toilet. However, sometimes the children just rinse their hands, rather than following the full routine of washing them thoroughly with soap, when they are not consistently monitored in the bathroom. Cross-infection is minimised as the children dry their hands with fresh individual towels. Nappy changing procedures are most hygienic as the staff use gloves and aprons, with disposable blue roll on the changing mat.

The children's health is further promoted by the setting's policies and procedures relating to sickness and the administration of medicines. There is, for instance, an exclusion policy and thorough procedures concerning the administration of medication. Accidents are recorded and monitored, so that staff can spot any emerging patterns, and identify if there are any problem areas of the provision where they need to take corrective action. If children were to suffer any minor injuries, the staff are well prepared as there is a central first aid cupboard, plus supplies of gloves and cold compresses outside ready to deal with any outdoor accidents. Children's emotional needs are well met as they all have key workers, who make good relationships with them. All of the children, and especially the babies, receive a great deal of one to one attention and reassuring hugs.

A healthy lifestyle is encouraged for the whole family through topic work, when the children learn about preparing healthy food as they make a huge fruit salad. In addition, they appreciate the benefits of exercise as they undertake a short sponsored walk and child-friendly assault course. Freshly cooked food, prepared on the premises by the cooks, ensures that the children enjoy a nutritious diet. The menu, which incorporates food from around the world, rotates and includes, for instance, roast pork and fresh vegetables, curry and pasta dishes, with banana and custard for dessert. Children enjoy a sociable time with their peers and the staff as they all sit down together for meals. The staff serve the children, which does not help the children develop independence, though the children have other opportunities to develop independence. For example, they help themselves to snacks throughout the day and cut up their own apple. Further independence is promoted as older children help themselves to water from the indoor dispenser, whilst younger children access water whenever they want to from their individual bottles.

There are good opportunities for all the children to gain fresh air and exercise as they benefit from free-flow indoor-outdoor play. The children develop a wide range of physical skills. For instance, they develop confidence as they balance on beams, weave in and out of each other as they ride the bikes and enjoy moving spontaneously, running up and down the hills. The children manage their bodies to create intended movement as they bend down to lift baskets and fly kites in the wind. They develop hand-eye coordination and develop fine motor skills as they deftly use scissors to cut pictures out of catalogues and manipulate dough with rollers and cutters.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment, which is warm and welcoming, with many examples of the children's artwork, such as their bright paintings of fish and hand prints adorning the walls. Useful information, including the setting's policies and details about car safety are displayed in the entrance, together with a range of colourful photographs taken during the setting's healthy lifestyle promotion week. Currently the children are cared for in three separate areas, with a separate room for the babies, one for the under three year olds and one for the over three year olds, though there are plans to amalgamate the provision for the under three year olds. There are good arrangements for sleeping and the children's posture is protected as they sleep in full size cots or on sleep mats in a quiet area. Children sleep according to their own needs and routines, whilst staff sensitively and gently soothe them to sleep.

There are two separate and securely fenced outdoor areas, one for the younger children and one for the older children. These areas are newly refurbished, well-equipped with, for instance, mini-slides, seesaws and bikes, and provide interesting areas for the children to explore. For example, there are wooden toadstools to sit on, a story telling chair, wind sails, mirrors, chalk boards and a digging area. Children are able to access these areas in all weathers as they have wellington boots, waterproof clothing and umbrellas. Children benefit from the broad range of toys, furniture and equipment, which meets the needs of all children attending, such as booster steps and child-sized cutlery, tables and chairs. The environment feels homely as natural materials, such as wood and wicker, predominate.

Staff have a good awareness of potential hazards and take positive steps to promote safety. For example, risk assessments are carried out daily and usually twice each day outdoors to ensure that the children are able to play safely. In addition, the premises are protected with a secure entry system, which ensures that both unauthorised persons cannot gain entry and children are unable to leave unattended. All fire equipment, such as emergency lighting and smoke alarms, is regularly checked to promote the children's safety in the event of a fire. Children learn to contribute to their own safety as they practise the fire escape plan every six months.

Children's welfare is protected due to the staff having a good understanding and experience of child protection matters. All of the staff have completed relevant training and are therefore familiar with the procedures to follow in the event of a concern. The staff ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities towards the children in their care through sharing and explaining the child protection policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff's approach, which is to provide stimulating activities that are child, rather than adult-led. Consequently, when, for example, the children become really interested in creative activities, such as painting, the staff encourage the children to extend this activity by providing clay to model with. Much emphasis is placed on the exploration of textures and materials through messy play. Babies thoroughly enjoy investigating flour, completely covering themselves in the process and dipping their feet into paint before making footprints. All staff are trained in the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which forms the basis of their practice.

Toddlers are very sociable, talking confidently with the staff at lunchtime, chuckling as they recall their experiences that morning of playing with the parachute in the wind. The children are able to use cutlery very competently, as staff encourage them to use their forks to pick up their vegetables. They relate well to one another and make each other giggle. They are secure and very comfortable about approaching the staff for a hug. All the staff respond warmly and positively to the children, for example, playing peek-a-boo with the babies and sitting cosily with the children to read stories in small groups. Young children develop communication skills as the staff talk to them constantly, explaining what they are doing and maintaining good eye contact. They smile and wave 'bye' to the other children as they leave to go home. Children gain from the staff's sensitivity in helping them to move to another room. Rather than moving strictly according to age, children change rooms according to their developmental needs. Staff ease the transition by the key worker accompanying the child as much as possible. The children have smiling, happy faces and clearly enjoy their time in the setting.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and, as a result, children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a suitable understanding of the Foundation Stage, which underpins their practice and enables them to provide a range of interesting activities to support children's learning across the six areas of the curriculum. All staff share in the setting's planning, with long-term plans relating to each area of provision and short-term plans, which include focused activities in response to children's interests. Plans incorporate indoor and outdoor play. Assessment methods record children's starting points and track their progress towards the early learning goals, including staff observations, examples of the children's work and some next steps in learning. However, observations are not always evaluated effectively to prompt the next steps in learning and to plan differentiated activities to meet the needs of the more able children.

Children communicate well with the use of their voice and body language, seeking eye contact before starting conversations and smiling engagingly to sustain the interaction. They begin to recognise the sounds their names begin with and use vocabulary appropriately as they describe 'beep baby' as soft and 'fluffy'. Using their imaginations and following instructions, the children speak quietly to avoid waking 'beep baby'. They handle books carefully and listen to stories in small groups. The children enjoy drawing and painting and begin to form the letters of their names. Staff successfully thread mathematical activities throughout the day. During circle time, for example, the children clap and touch their heads four times. They learn to recognise numerals and perform simple calculations as they work out how many spaces the 'roamer', an educational robot, needs to cross to reach the top of the paper. With staff's questioning, the children consolidate their understanding of the concept of size, as they identify 'small', 'big' and 'bigger' cardboard tubes.

The children show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities as they spontaneously replenish the water for painting. However, at mealtimes, opportunities to develop independence are limited as the staff serve the children's food. Confidently, they approach adults as they show them the pictures on their tee-shirts. They display high levels of involvement as they sustain concentration, carefully making sparkly pictures, which they proudly show to the staff. Children take the initiative and manage developmentally appropriate tasks as older children put their own shoes on, whilst younger children seek the assistance of adults. The children learn about the natural world as they investigate the properties of water, fascinated by its ability to freeze in frosty weather, before turning back to water again, as it melts in their hands. Their interest in the weather is stimulated by the staff, who provide different resource

boxes, according to the conditions. For instance, on a windy day the children fly kites and play with windmills, whereas on a wet day the children have umbrellas and catch raindrops.

Knowing how to operate simple technology, the children take photographs with a digital camera, though they are unable to use the computer, because it is currently not set up for their use. The children have a sense of time and happily talk to staff about significant events, such as when they went to hospital and saw their skeleton feet, in the X ray. Creative activities, such as painting, are favoured by the children as they explore what happens when they mix colours, such as red and white to make pink. The children freely use their imagination as they pretend to run into the forest outside to escape from the 'big, bad wolf'. They respond to music, by joining in the singing of, 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' and heartily wave their arms as they do the actions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and treated as individuals, in accordance with the setting's equal opportunities policy. At the outset, the staff gather as much information as possible about the children including details of dietary and cultural requirements. Staff then sensitively ensure that the children receive the care appropriate to their needs and use circle time, for example, to build the confidence of children new to the setting, or with challenging behaviour. Children learn about their community and the wider world through activities, such as walks in the community to the park and to school, plus visits to animal parks and zoos. Children gain positive images of diversity through access to a good range of resources, including books and toys, and through the visits of people from different cultures to the nursery. The setting encourages families to share the celebration of their festivals, such as Divali, with the nursery. Staff help children who speak English as an additional language to settle as, following consultation with the parents, they use words that are familiar to them. In addition, as part of their outreach work, the staff signpost parents to relevant courses to develop literacy and language skills as appropriate. Positive attitudes are further promoted as resources, such as the art area, are labelled in different languages, plus the children learn to communicate with children who sign through the use of makaton. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There are effective arrangements to care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities, as there is an appropriate policy and a trained Special Educational Needs Coordinator. In addition, staff operate a key worker system and are committed to working closely with parents and a variety of professionals to meet the developmental needs of each child. The staff manage the children's behaviour through the use of positive role modelling and clear consistent boundaries. Emphasis is placed on developing the children's awareness and empathy for their peers. Children are praised for good behaviour and encouraged through the use of star charts and rewards. Continuity of care is promoted as staff and parents work together in handling any challenging behaviour by adopting a consistent approach and seeking additional help where necessary. Children learn responsibility and grow in self-esteem as every day one of them is a 'helper'. They wear the 'helper' badge proudly as they assist staff, for instance, in setting the tables for lunch. During circle time, the children learn to take turns as they all have the chance to stroke 'beep baby' as they pass the soft toy around the group.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. There is a comprehensive exchange of information between staff and the parents when children join the setting. Parents, for instance, complete an 'All About Me' booklet, whilst the staff explain the policies and routines in the setting. When

children enter the Foundation Stage, the staff provide written information and verbal explanations about the curriculum. Subsequently parents are kept informed through information on the notice board and three-monthly newsletters, plus daily verbal feedback and twice yearly written reports about their children's progress and development. Policies are always available in the entrance for parents to view and when they are reviewed, parents' involvement is welcomed. Settling procedures are thorough as children have a minimum of five visits before starting. Parents then receive a settling-in report. Regular open days and the ready accessibility of the children's profiles, to which parents may add their comments, further ensure that parents are well informed about their children's educational achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is very well organised by an acting manager and deputy, who have worked effectively since their manager's departure to maintain stability and develop the setting in their commitment to provide high quality care. They have a good knowledge of the National Standards and are assisted by a teacher, who has recently arrived to work in the setting three days per week. The staff are a well qualified group, who are prepared for their roles through a thorough induction process, during which they become familiar with the policies and shadow a member of staff to become accustomed to the routines. Subsequently, staff are regularly appraised and supported through supervision and meetings.

Good recruitment procedures are followed to ensure that staff who work with the children are suitable to do so; for example, background checks are carried out and references taken up. Staff are deployed effectively in the setting and, with adult-child ratios maintained, children are assured of a good level of support. The staff consistently and warmly interact with the children, providing encouragement, which helps all children, including those who are shy, feel secure and confident. Children benefit from the comprehensive range of policies and procedures, which provide a structure for the safe and efficient management of the setting. In addition, the documentation, such as the registration system, is appropriately maintained and clearly shows when staff, visitors and children are present.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Together, the acting manager and teacher have clear plans to improve the quality of care and education, with, for example, the fusion of the babies' and under three year olds' areas to limit transitional changes and promote continuity. In addition, the areas of provision are being reviewed and refined so that the children can gain maximum benefit from the resources. Furthermore, through working alongside the staff and leading a programme of regular training sessions, the teacher is sharing her knowledge and developing the skills of the staff in order to enhance the delivery of the educational curriculum.

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 provision was asked to develop the older children's independence at mealtimes.

Since the last inspection, the provision has provided smaller water jugs so that the children can pour their own drinks at lunchtime. This has a positive effect on the children's ability to enjoy and achieve as they are able to become more independent.

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 good. 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):

- ensure that all children follow the full hand washing routine

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):

- extend the opportunities for children to develop independence at mealtimes (also applies to care)
- continue to develop the effective evaluation of observations to plan the next steps in learning and differentiate activities to meet the needs of more able children
- extend opportunities for the children to develop an interest in information and communication technology.

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