

Sutton Centre Under 5's Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253043
Inspection date	10 December 2007
Inspector	Janice Walker
Setting Address	Sutton Centre, High Pavement, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire, NG17 1EE
Telephone number	01623 457613
E-mail	
Registered person	The Trustees of Sutton Centre Under 5's Preschool
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are 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?

Sutton Centre Under 5's Preschool is a parent committee run provision. It became registered in 1994 and operates from its own self-contained premises within a community school complex in the centre of Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire. Space comprises of a large room with separate office and kitchen. There is access to a secure outside play area which is part paved and part safety surface, with a small garden area.

The setting is open Monday-Friday between 09.15 and 11.45 and Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 12.45 and 15.15, during school term times only. A maximum of 23 children may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 36 children on roll. Of these, 25 receive funding for early education. Children attending come from the local community.

The setting employs five members of staff to work with the children, four of these, including the Supervisor, hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and also receives support from the local authority and the local Sure Start facility.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and comfortable environment where staff's high standards of cleanliness help to promote children's good health. Good hygiene practices are in place which helps to protect children from the risk of possible spread of infection. The setting's clear policies, for example, relating to children who are unwell, support this. Children evidence a good understanding of personal hygiene. Adult support and clear explanations, support their understanding of when and why they wash their hands, where tissues are available and how and when to use them. Good systems for recording accidents and medication, along with an adequate number of staff with first aid qualifications, ensures that the setting can respond effectively in the event of an accident or emergency, although this is possibly compromised as systems to ensure that the first aid box is stocked adequately are not fully effective.

Children independently help themselves to drinks and snacks at any time during the session when they are thirsty and hungry. Staff promote healthy eating through the provision of fresh fruit and vegetables for snack times and support children's understanding of the importance of this through planned activities as part of the curriculum. They evidence a comprehensive awareness of children's individual dietary needs which ensures that these are met.

Physical activity forms part of daily routines which supports children's positive attitude to physical exercise and they practice their developing physical skills through the provision of a versatile and innovative range of activities. Staff plan physical play meticulously, making excellent use of the daily challenge system to encourage children to participate in an exciting range of activities which promote their large motor skills, such as running games, sack races, balancing challenges and moving to music. Children confidently climb and balance on the climbing frame, pedal bicycles and ride scooters and sit-on vehicles confidently, moving at speed and steering them skilfully around obstacles. Through organised activities and ongoing reminders, they are aware of changes that happen to their body as they exert themselves, and know how to decrease their heart beat and to have a drink if they are thirsty. They use a wide range of tools and equipment to promote their fine hands skills such as scissors, glue sticks and small joining toys with increasing competence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children play and learn in warm, welcoming and stimulating environment. Staff's efforts to transform the room into a rich learning environment is inspirational; photographs and displays adorn walls and ceilings and children become animated as they recall the work they contributed, or related activities. The room is very well organised; separated into areas of learning with each area having its own storage space with clearly labelled boxes of equipment to support children's independent choices. Children use good quality, age-appropriate toys and equipment and there are comprehensive systems in place to check that they remain safe for them to use.

Staff demonstrate an excellent awareness of safety issues and vigilantly supervise the children. They meticulously undertake daily safety checks to ensure that the environment is hazard-free to help to minimise the risk of accidents. Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that children's safety is promoted at all times and systems are in place to respond to unplanned emergencies. Children are kept safe on outings due to clear procedures that are understood

and effectively implemented by staff. They ensure that they can effectively supervise the children and respond swiftly in the event of an accident or emergency whilst outside of the building.

Children are learning how to keep themselves safe through daily routines and discussions. For example, they carry chairs carefully, are mindful of other children when manoeuvring their vehicles outdoors and walk nicely indoors. Well-organised, carefully planned activities actively promote children's awareness of possible dangers in the wider environment, and their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, the lollipop lady visited to support the road safety theme and children role played crossing the road with her and the fire service visited to help raise their awareness of fire safety. Staff then carefully plan activities so that children have many opportunities to re-enact what they have learned, and photographs and art work related to the theme act as prompts and reminders.

Children's welfare is very effectively promoted as all staff have attended child protection training and demonstrate a clear understanding of her responsibilities within this area. They are fully familiar with the setting's comprehensive written procedures which include relevant contact details. Good procedures and practices ensure that children are protected from adults who have not been vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children have great fun whilst at the pre-school. They thrive and achieve well because staff are highly skilled and use their extensive understanding of early years guidance such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to plan and provide high quality care and education. All children arrive happy and keen to participate. Those new to the group or less confident are helped to settle by the kind, caring and able staff team who are sensitive towards children's individual needs. The younger children flourish because staff give them high levels of support which is tailored to their individual level of ability. Staff build firm relationships with parents to develop strong working relationships and as a result they know the children extremely well, increasing children's trust and their confidence to participate and express themselves. Children are excited to learn and they participate in a diverse range of inspiring and innovative fun activities and experiences where they explore and investigate. They consolidate their learning and explore independently as they make independent choices from a wide range of toys in the highly organised and well-planned pre-school room.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The consistent and confident staff team have an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They carefully plan a balanced programme of inspiring and versatile activities that cover all six areas of the curriculum, captivating children's interest and engagement. Plans are based on children's needs and interests. For example, when a parent expressed concern about her child's lack of safety awareness when crossing the road, the planned topic became 'people who help us' with many activities related to road safety including a visit from the lollipop lady. Staff use their comprehensive knowledge of how children learn through play to make skilful judgements about when to intervene to enhance learning and when to allow children free rein to explore their creativity and imagination. They are abundantly clear of their role within planned activities, skilfully adapting these to meet children's individual needs. They interact with children in purposeful and considered ways to promote all

aspects of their development. All staff have attended in-house training on signs and symbols to support children with communication difficulties and are continually striving to introduce their learning into daily routines. Children behave impeccably, they are clear of staff's expectations regarding care of equipment and, through effective support from staff, they are learning to negotiate and begin to resolve problems for themselves. For example, children know that it is only safe for four of them to be on the climbing frame at any one time, and when they realise there are five of them, they confidently, not only count themselves and work out that there is one too many, but also skilfully and amiably resolve themselves that the child who joined them last, must get down and wait until there is room.

Carefully considered daily routines ensure that children spend the majority of their time actively engaged in play. Their routine provides them with plentiful opportunities to investigate areas of interest, initiate play ideas and consolidate their learning and to come together in large and small groups. During adult-led small group activities, children weigh ingredients to make Christmas cakes and discuss the changes as they mix them together; they compare snowflake designs, fascinated to observe the changing shapes as they fold and unfold their paper and one child excitedly announces 'look, I've made a boat' and observes the changing shape as it unfolds. Small groups to support children's communication skills are excellently organised. Highly valued and intensive input from the speech therapist has supported staff in grouping children effectively for story times which are intricately planned to ensure each child contributes their thoughts and opinions as they share this time together. Children thoroughly enjoy large group times which are also seen as active opportunities for them to participate in. They count how many of them are present at circle time and then separate into boys and girls to count each group to begin to develop an awareness of basic calculating. They watch in excited anticipation as staff perform puppet shows, laughing with delight as each animal appears and cementing relationships with each other as they share the magical moment of confirmation that they have correctly guessed the creature which made the preceding noise. They rapidly learn new songs, prompted by visual aids and sing with enthusiasm as they practise for their Christmas concert.

Children display strong independence skills; they competently put on and remove dressing-up clothes, aprons and outdoor clothing, use the bathroom and select and return toys from their storage boxes. This is particularly well promoted through snack routines when children choose when they eat, find their own drinks and serve themselves their fruit. The environment is rich and stimulating; staff make their own resources to enhance existing ones to provide different dimensions to activities and children spend large portions of their time outdoors where they engage in a wide variety of activities covering all aspects of the curriculum. Resources are very well organised and children confidently make their own selections from easily accessible storage units, to extend their play. They engage animatedly in role play, being free to move around the whole room inspires their imagination and a group of boys carefully manoeuvre themselves around the climbing frame as they purposefully repair and build a roof on their 'castle'. Through resources and well-planned activities, they begin to understand that people have different needs and begin to learn about different cultures and beliefs. Staff make excellent use of the local environment to support children's learning, children grow vegetables, fruit and herbs in the garden, enjoy nature walks and visit near-by resources such as the market stalls, opticians and fire station. Regular visitors to the setting, such as a nurse and dentist help to support their awareness of the local and wider community and the lives of others. At the point of admission, through effective communication with parents along with their own ongoing observations, staff find out about what children can already do along with their needs and interests. They then make highly effective use of this information to consider their next steps in learning and to entice children into learning areas they visit less frequently. For example,

children who enjoy outdoor play and role play but show limited interest in mark-making, eagerly make registration plates to go on the bicycles and, following a visit to the optician, make eye-charts for the role play area which is turned into an opticians. Children consequently make rapid progress in all areas of their development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have a comprehensive knowledge of individual children, based on their observations and their ongoing effective communication with parents. They use their knowledge to support children's all-round developmental needs. Children flourish in the setting because they build strong bonds with staff who place a high value on what individual children have to offer. Their art work, photographs and rewards earned are attractively and prominently displayed around the room and staff frequently draw attention to these. Staff have an exceptionally clear understanding of equality of opportunity and all children have access to the full range of activities. Children who have additional needs are able to access play and learning alongside their friends because the competent and committed staff team provide an environment along with appropriate support to facilitate this. Children learn about their own culture through well-planned activities which include those based around traditional festivals such as Christmas and Easter. They are learning to value similarities and differences by participating in activities such as looking in mirrors and making a picture of themselves, discussing features which are similar to those of their friends and those which are different. Vibrant posters, positive images in the wide range of books and many other stimulating resources also encourage children to value diversity and they further explore the wider world through an impressive range of activities linked to festivals.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are excellent role models and children emulate their behaviour. They understand the simple but clear rules and, through gentle and skilful support from staff, begin to learn to resolve conflict for themselves, for example, to take turns and share equipment. The ladybird reward system contributes significantly to children's cooperation as they eagerly attempt to earn spots and proudly explain how they earned those already in place. Innovative tidy up routines which allocates each child to a small group of children who have responsibility for an identified area of the room is superbly effective in encouraging children to care for their toys and equipment and developing a sense of ownership. They work enthusiastically and cooperatively together in their small groups to tidy up, diligently putting toys in the correct boxes, cleaning paint easels and sand equipment and searching for missing pieces of puzzles. Children are listened to and their thoughts and wishes are taken account of, consequently they are respectful of others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff develop excellent relationships with parents and warmly welcome them into the setting, making themselves available to exchange information. They gather a thorough range of details on admission to ensure consistency of care for children. Parents have access to a detailed range of information about the setting, and receive regular newsletters, keeping them advised about practices and current issues. Parents are actively encouraged to attend the setting to share in their children's care and learning, many are extremely effective parent-helpers, evidencing a clear understanding of how to support and extend activities. Others have many opportunities to participate in organised events such as sports days and the Christmas concert. All are invited to contribute their views and opinions about the provision through the bi-annual parent-questionnaire.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is outstanding. Parents receive comprehensive information about the Foundation Stage once

children become eligible for funding so they develop a clear awareness of the curriculum. Thorough information in newsletters informs them of how children's learning is supported in the setting along with detailed suggestions of how they can support this within the home. Children take home 'listening bags' which contain fun activities to support their next steps of development and older children also take a book home to encourage early reading skills. There are comprehensive systems in place to share information about children's progress and development. Parents provide information on admission about their child which enables staff to build on what they already know. Key workers then provide purposeful termly reports to ensure parents' are fully informed about their child's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

A consistent team of experienced, well-qualified and dedicated staff care for the children. Recruitment procedures are mainly secure. However, albeit harmonious working conditions and clear leadership mean that in practice staff turnover is minimal, the systems for ensuring any new staff are mentally and physically suitable to work with children are not fully comprehensive. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and appropriately shared with parents. Records relating to children's learning and development are meticulously maintained to provide parents with a clear picture of their children's abilities.

Staff are exceptionally well supported to develop their knowledge and skills through regular training opportunities, an appraisal system and weekly team meetings. The key-worker system is very well organised to ensure high levels of individual support to both parents and children. The excellent arrangements for the grouping of children for small group activities ensure that they work at a level appropriate to their ability and contribute fully. Very good use is made of the available space and resources with clearly defined play and learning areas. Staff make very good use of the outdoor play area to support all areas of learning. They deploy themselves exceptionally well to provide children with a good balance of adult support and opportunities to explore and investigate independently.

Leadership and management of early education is outstanding. There are clear aims for the setting, which all staff are aware of and which are included in the welcome booklet for parents' information. Comprehensive systems, such as appraisals and ongoing training, are in place to monitor and evaluate practice and staff work closely and highly effectively with external agencies for specialist advice and support as needed. Meticulous planning systems are in place ensuring all aspects of the curriculum are thoroughly covered and all staff contribute to these, ensuring skills and knowledge are shared. Rigorous monitoring systems help to identify individual children's movements and staff then use the information gathered to adapt and extend the curriculum to entice children into areas they rarely independently access. The organisation of large group activities, such as registration time, also changes according to the needs of children attending. Staff skilfully adapt these sessions, shortening them to maintain children's interest and concentration and gradually lengthening them as children's skills increase. The dedicated staff team demonstrate a highly commendable level of commitment to the provision and work fruitfully together to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and ensure children achieve superbly well. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the setting agreed to two recommendations relating to care. They agreed to improve hand-washing practices and to increase staff's knowledge of current child protection documentation.

Systems are now in place to further support hand washing routines; staff remind children before snacks and after messy play, signs and symbols beside the hand-washing facilities support this. Children also learn about personal hygiene through planned activities as part of the curriculum. These measures contribute towards maintaining children's general good health. Since the previous inspection, all staff have attended child protection training to update their knowledge and government guidance is prominently displayed in the kitchen area as a reminder so that correct procedures can be followed in the event of any concerns, there-by safeguarding children's welfare.

At the previous inspection, two recommendations were raised in relation to nursery education. These were to extend opportunities for the children to develop mathematical ideas and solve practical problems and to build and construct with a wide range of materials.

Since the last inspection, all staff have attended training relating to children's mathematical development and, as a result, staff introduced many new ideas into daily routines to promote this more effectively. Planning ensures that all aspects of mathematical development are covered fully within planned activities. In order to extend opportunities for children to build and construct, staff have reviewed the organisation of the room and resources to enable children to freely access construction toys and equipment within the creative area so that they can shape, assemble and join materials of their choosing.

Complaints since the last inspection

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

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are 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 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 the contents of the first aid box are checked frequently and replaced as necessary

- improve the recruitment systems to ensure that any new staff are suitable, both mentally and physically, to care for children.

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