

The Sunshine Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY338625
Inspection date	26 February 2008
Inspector	Jill Milton
Setting Address	The Sunshine Centre, Edmunds Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 0PJ
Telephone number	01295 276769
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Registered person	The Sunshine Centre
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Sunshine Centre became a public limited company in 2007 and is managed by a board of directors. The setting is a designated children's centre that serves the families of the local residential estates in the Bretch Hill area of Banbury. A variety of childcare is offered by the centre which includes two day nurseries, a crèche and out of school care.

All childcare takes place in purpose-built accommodation and there are outdoor play facilities for the children. One day nursery offers nine sessions of care in term time from 9.15 to 11.45 and from 12.45 to 14.45 for children between two and five years. A second day nursery offers care for children from birth to 11 years for 51 weeks of the year. This nursery opens from 08.00 to 18.00 each weekday with wrap-around and holiday care for school-aged children. A crèche to support parents and carers attending the centre is provided as required.

There are currently 75 children from three months to five years attending the day nurseries and of these 16 are in receipt of nursery education funding. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and support is offered to those with English as an additional language.

A manager oversees the day-to-day running of the children's centre with support from a management team. A total of 16 staff work with the children and over half have appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority. A number of additional services are on offer to families. They include adult education and fitness classes, alternative therapies, access to advice from health professionals and a range of drop-in sessions. Staff at the centre also provide outreach services to the local community.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from care in clean environments where staff maintain good procedures to protect their health. Children receive regular reminders to wash their hands and the well-designed bathroom areas encourage children to be independent. Staff have all supplies to hand when changing children's nappies and toddlers are able to climb onto changing units themselves supervised carefully by staff. Should children have an occasional accident the staff are good at passing on information to parents and there are fresh medical supplies in all areas to attend to children quickly.

Children attending the setting are receiving positive messages about healthy eating. They regularly eat fresh fruit and all can access drinking water throughout the day. Children often participate in preparing food, for example, by helping to slice cheese or when making fruit salad. Children staying for breakfast club or after school care receive nourishing foods that replenish their energy levels. Staff work well with parents to learn about children's individual health needs and they consistently share amongst the teams any information regarding allergies. Children's risk of infection is minimised since staff prepare food in clean kitchen areas and they ensure refrigerators remain at a safe temperature. Children take part in pleasant and sociable meal and snack times. This provides them with good messages about sitting together whilst eating and sharing conversations.

Children enjoy play times outdoors in the fresh air and all rooms in the setting are able to operate free flow play to the outside. Staff encourage children to access outdoors all year by providing them with suitable protective clothing. This enables children to have choice and most select to take part in energetic activities. Although some outdoor play areas of the setting are still under development there are good opportunities overall for children to progress with their physical skills. Children benefit from active play indoors too and they show good co-operative skills when taking part in group activities. Children experiment with travelling up, over and through large soft blocks. There are quiet areas for children to rest as they need to and the babies benefit from a comfortable sleeping room. Here babies can sleep in clean, peaceful surroundings with staff conducting regular checks to ensure they are safe.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in well-organised and stimulating environments. The newly built premises provide clean and comfortable surroundings using designs to meet the needs of young children. Staff are adding all the time to displays to create colourful examples of the children's activities. There are also some useful facilities for the staff and families using the centre with rooms available for flexible use, for example, when children require extra one-to-one support or staff wish to talk confidentially. Babies enjoy time in their own attractively presented area with plenty of

equipment to support their development. All the older children have access to their own designated play areas where they can access a broad range of good quality equipment. There is a very good emphasis on presenting resources so that children can develop their independence and make their own choices.

Children play safely since staff supervise them carefully throughout the day. There are some good security measures in place such as the use of keypad entry systems, high door handles and at one site the presence of a receptionist to welcome visitors. Staff use a mixture of visual and written risk assessments to ensure areas are safe for children to play in and they take action if they identify a potential hazard. An example being with the replacement of a computer mouse with one that has less trailing wires. Over time, the children take part in fire evacuations though some new teams of staff are still awaiting to do this and nursery staff do not routinely keep records in a fire log. Children are developing a useful awareness of safety themselves when staff talk to them about issues like no running indoors or how to move a table safely together.

Children's welfare is paramount to staff who have a good understanding of the area of child protection. The staff are fully aware of the issues and work effectively together and with other professionals to safeguard children. The staff attend the latest training courses to ensure their knowledge is up-to-date and they are confident about how to support children and take action on their behalf to protect them effectively.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy making use of the interesting play areas open to them. They are developing confidence at making their own decisions about what to play and they benefit from being able to select resources from low-level units within their reach. The babies attending the setting receive warm individual attention from staff and babies show their attachment to their carers when they see them coming into the room. Babies are stimulated by the colourful resources available to them and they become engrossed in exploring the different textures of simple household items. Staff have a good awareness of the routines of the babies in their care and they make perceptive notes about their individual development. Children in the toddler age range enjoy similar lively sessions with plenty to occupy and interest them. Good ratios of adults attending to their care means that they have support to help them progress. Staff caring for children under three years are comfortable using the Birth to three matters framework to plan activities and assess the children's development. There is plenty of emphasis on sensory play for the younger children where they can explore using their developing senses.

Children of a wider age range make use of the breakfast club and after school care and they receive consistent support from the staff. The children have a good number of activities to choose from and they are able to make use of the spacious outdoor areas at the end of the day. Staff are fully aware of the slightly different needs of the older children and they are building up the resources on offer for this age group.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children attend one of two day care facilities at the children's centre where they are in receipt of nursery education funding. In both areas, the children are able to make encouraging progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff use the Foundation Stage as the basis for their planning and they put detail into thinking of how learning through play occurs in the different areas of the setting.

Staff plan and evaluate specific activities and written notes demonstrate their awareness of the purpose of the activity to promote children's learning.

The children are developing friendships with others and they know the staff well. They are gaining independence as staff encourage them to do tasks for themselves and they receive praise for trying. Children behave well and follow staff instructions. A young group, for example, line up sensibly to move to another room and they play co-operatively when acting out ring games in a circle. Children spending time in the school nursery cope confidently and enjoy the stimulating environment in a larger group. They are always accompanied by a member of staff known to them to provide reassurance if it were needed. Children are learning that print carries meaning and most can recognise their own names. Children talk frequently to the staff and share conversations about their families. They are learning how to use some sign language when they join in with a 'hello' or 'good-bye' song. Mark-making takes place around the setting with children making use of a wide range of tempting resources. There is a strong emphasis on using good quality books for story telling and staff make themselves available to share books with children in small groups.

Children take part in practical mathematical activities to help their early understanding of shape, size and quantity. All areas of the setting include sand and water play that encourages children to explore with containers of different sizes. Children learn to sort and match similar objects and they see numerals on display. Cooking presents children with the chance to count out ingredients with staff and to observe changes in materials. They are learning about seasons and events during the year like cultural celebrations, although in this relatively new setting there are few resources like plants and animals to enrich children's appreciation of nature. All children have access to computers and staff provide software suitable for the different ages. A large clear keyboard and easy-to-use mouse encourages even the youngest children to become familiar with technology. Children are developing their skills of co-ordination and control as they use tools like scissors and pencils. They explore using a hand pump and outdoor tap to make water run into the large sand pit or water tray. Children express their own ideas and imaginations. They select dressing-up clothes, paint a picture or make a design with recycled materials. Some take part in making a group display showing their confident use of glue sticks whilst others prefer to follow their own creative ideas. Children are familiar with a range of well-known rhymes and songs that help their early literacy skills. A sensory room tempts children in to experience twinkling lights and a colourful bubble tube. Children remind each other of the house rules of taking off their shoes before entering this area.

Staff regularly record their observations of the children's achievements. They make effective use of this information to plan the next steps in children's learning to help them progress. This individual approach to teaching occurs throughout the setting and provides effective support to children. Staff are still exploring how to present this information in a more user-friendly way to share with parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A very positive approach to equal opportunities in the setting means that all children and families receive a warm welcome. The children's self-esteem is built up effectively as they become familiar with routines and know where to keep their own belongings. Children are aware of when an activity is to change by the ringing of a hand bell and they use photographs to make a visual time line of what is happening that day. Staff value the children's opinions and they use props such as Ralph the dog puppet to ask the children what they like to play.

Older children are able to contribute their feelings about a holiday play scheme by completing questionnaires with pictures and words. A colourful and stimulating range of resources and activities introduce children to the wider world, helping them to develop respect for others. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good quality care whilst attending the setting. The staff are knowledgeable about how to support the children and they work effectively with other professionals in setting targets to help the children progress at their own rate. The same positive attitude is used when helping children for whom English is an additional language. Signs and books in dual languages provide supportive messages to families about the value placed on their cultural backgrounds. Children in all areas are learning how to behave well and the staff provide consistent guidance. Children receive praise when they do something well and they are learning to share. This begins when toddlers first encounter having to take turns with a popular toy and staff step in to offer simple explanations. Older children are learning to cope with situations themselves, using sand timers, for example, to limit turns or when having to think if an action is a sensible choice.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. This begins when families start at one of the nurseries and staff spend time finding out about the children. There is a strong emphasis on daily conversations with parents as they drop off and collect their children and staff are on hand to discuss issues if parents need to. There is a relaxed and informal atmosphere in the setting and families receive encouragement to share their views by completing forms entitled 'help us to get it right'. Parents can view a wide range of information to keep them informed about opportunities on offer in the setting and about what is happening in the groups with the children. Staff make good use of photographs to display, for example, how children engage in different types of mark-making using a wide range of different techniques. Parents and carers hear from staff how the children are progressing, although some current methods of record keeping do not make it very easy to see an overall picture.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

This is a well-organised setting where staff are working together to provide support to children in the local community. The leadership and management are good. Managerial staff are highly qualified and experienced and they have a good awareness of what is happening throughout the different areas of the setting. Children know the managers by name and give them a warm welcome when they come to visit rooms. There is a strong working partnership in place with staff of the Orchard Fields school and a desire by all to work together to improve outcomes for children. Policies and procedures work well to contribute to children's good health, safety and well-being. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

There are effective systems in place for the recruitment, induction and on-going support to staff. Thorough checks take place on new adults working in the setting to ensure they are suitable to work with young children. Staff receive encouragement to attend training courses and they have access to a wide range of reference materials in their comfortable staff room. Staff demonstrate a positive attitude to improvement and they took a number of measures following the last inspection. They are now more reflective of the way they work and are starting to collect photographic examples of the things they do well. This helps them to begin to identify their own shortcomings and add to their on-going action plans for improvement. There is a strong understanding of the documentation required to run a successful setting. All staff

organise their paperwork efficiently and they are all aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

The children's centre offers families in the area an excellent range of opportunities. Examples include classes to promote fitness, computer skills or alternative health therapies. Staff offer many drop-in sessions to encourage and support young parents and health professionals visit the centre to make it easy for families to access their advice. The staff publicise their services through a range of colourful leaflets and the centre is a constant hive of activity during the day. From the complimentary comments from families using the centre, the services are having a positive impact on the outcomes for children particularly in the area of children's health.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of care the setting was required to improve the deployment of staff throughout the nursery day. They now bring staff deployment into their planning and weekly sheets show where staff are to work. This helps the staff to be clearer about their own roles and provides more focused supervision of the children at play.

At the last inspection the nursery education was found to be inadequate. Staff were required to address two actions to improve the standards and good progress has been made to address the weaknesses. Staff now have a much better understanding of the educational curriculum. They have responded well to the advice from managerial staff and other visiting professionals. Planning of activities is now based on the Foundation Stage and staff regularly assess their progress along the stepping stones. Staff are also now more adept at evaluating what they do and they make use of regular team meetings to discuss issues. Managerial staff are now more closely involved in monitoring standards and they make action plans for future areas of development of the setting. The impact on the children of these improvements is to ensure they are receiving better quality nursery education.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 nursery education are good.

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):

- further develop the outdoor play areas to provide children with challenge and exciting play opportunities
- ensure staff and children in all areas take part in regular fire evacuations and a log of them is maintained.

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):

- expand ways of sharing information with parents about how children are progressing
- consider introducing children to living things like plants and animals to extend their awareness of the natural world.

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