

The Oak Centre Activity Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226919
Inspection date	14 January 2008
Inspector	Kate Bryan
Setting Address	Bendbow Rise, Braunstone, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE3 1QA
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Registered person	Leicester City Council
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of 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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Oak Centre is a neighbourhood centre situated on the Braunstone Estate in the city of Leicester. The group operates from a designated room with associated facilities and children also access the hall. The group is culturally diverse taking children from the local neighbourhood and wider area.

The group is registered for 16 children and currently has 13 children on roll. It operates for five days a week from 09.15 until 11.45 and on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 12.20 until 14.30. The group offers support to children with English as an additional language and can offer support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are four members of staff who work directly with the children, all of whom hold a childcare qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted because good measures are in place to minimise cross-infection. For example, children use liquid soap and a roller towel to wash their hands. Children also gain a good understanding of personal hygiene through effective daily routines, such as washing their hands before food. They also know why they do this because staff have spoken to them about germs. A policy relating to infectious children is in place which contains an exclusion period of 48 hours for contagious diseases so all children's health is well-maintained. Good systems for recording accidents are in place and also parental consents for emergency medical treatment, although in practice the group does not dispense medication to children.

Children's needs for a drink are met as they can access water at all times. Snacks consist of a range of fruits that they enjoy, for example, bananas, apples and grapes. Children understand the need for healthy eating because they have completed topic work on this and have also made sandwiches and fruit kebabs. Staff sit with children during snack time so they also learn good social skills.

The group does not have access to an outdoor area but children have physical play indoors daily which gives them a suitable range of challenges. For example, they develop their climbing and balancing skills through the use of equipment, such as a climbing frame and bikes. Children have good opportunities to develop their small hand skills through activities, such as painting, moulding play dough, using scissors, rolling pins and knives.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment where staff's good understanding of safety issues effectively promotes their well-being. Children use good quality equipment and play materials and these are checked daily to ensure they remain safe for them to use. Staff also carry out comprehensive risk assessments so they can act appropriately to maintain a safe environment. Resources are within easy reach of children so they can access these in free play and staff ensure that there is sufficient space between activities to minimise the risk of trips and falls. Staff are deployed effectively to ensure that children are always within sight or sound of them and the room is bright and inviting with lots of children's work displayed on the walls.

The facility is secure so that children are not able to leave unsupervised and staff closely and effectively monitor access. Children are learning to keep themselves safe through discussion and safe practices. For example, staff remind them of safety rules, such as not spilling water on the floor and the consequences of this for themselves and others.

Children's welfare is effectively promoted because staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection. They are fully familiar with the setting's policies and procedures and the roles and responsibilities of all staff within. They also have appropriate contact numbers readily available.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and happy in the setting because staff know them as individuals and provide high levels of comfort and support to help them settle and feel confident.

Staff are using the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning activities for younger children, however, observations are not frequent enough to chart children's progress and there is no link to an assessment. This means staff cannot see what children have learnt and need to learn next. The organisation of space and resources provides good opportunities for children to select and make choices in their play. For example, children can choose from floor activities, a mark-making table, painting, stacking, matching and reading. This promotes their independence and learning well. Staff also supply a good range of adult-led activities, such as using play dough and painting so children have a good balance to their day.

Staff are enthusiastic about their work and warm relationships are in place between them and the children. Staff spend time talking to children and give them lots of praise, for example, when they stack shapes. This lets children know they are valued and encourages them to persevere in challenges, such as balancing on pots. Children awareness of sounds and words are well-promoted as staff use phonics with them to ensure they know what letters words begin with. They are also beginning to explore making sounds as they enjoy using musical instruments. Staff also spend time sitting individually with children and reading to them so children learn how words and language work. Children have a good awareness of numbers and counting as these are practised in routine activities, such as lining up and the children have a good repertoire of songs containing numbers which they like to sing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are valued and begin to learn about equality as staff ensure they all have access to a good range of toys. They are beginning to develop an awareness of differences in society by accessing a range of play resources that reflect positive images of the wider world and by acknowledging a range of festivals, such as Diwali. Staff are good role models because they are calm, kind and explain to children what behaviour is acceptable. The group also use behaviour cards which are displayed so the children learn to be responsible for their own behaviour. These remind them of basic rules, such as sharing. Children receive lots of praise for their efforts and achievements which effectively raises their self-esteem. There are sound systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a staff member has attended training in signs and symbols to ensure all children can be included in the group. The group use a pictorial timetable so all children are aware how the group and activities operate. However, the written statement is not in full accord with the Code of Practice 2001 for the identification and assessment of special needs. This means, for example, that children's needs may not be promoted as effectively as possible as staff do not use key words to communicate with children who would benefit from this.

Staff have good relationships with parents and a key worker system allows parents to communicate and receive specific information about their child. This contributes to promoting consistency of care for children. Parents also receive a termly newsletter and can join their children in workshops. However, parents do not receive basic written information about the setting or about policies and procedures that are available. This means they do not have a complete awareness of how children are cared for.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting is well-organised which allows children to move around their environment in safety. Quiet areas, such as the reading corner also provides children with the opportunity to sit quietly and look at books. Staff are recruited using robust selection procedures which ensure they are suitably vetted and qualified to work with children. Relevant induction procedures and on-going support through team meetings also ensures they can deliver a consistent service to children. Training is well-supported at the group and has included first aid, health and hygiene, child protection, the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. Yearly appraisals also provide staff with an opportunity to reflect upon their practice.

All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and the operational plan has been divided into folders outlining how the group meet the inspection outcomes. However, the organisation has failed to inform Ofsted of significant changes to staffing at the group which may compromise children's safety. This is a breach in regulations. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to devise and implement a clear policy, understood by all staff, regarding the administration of medication; devise and implement a system to record any incident of physical restraint; ensure that the child protection statement includes the procedure to be followed if allegations are made against staff; confirm who the registered person and nominated person is to be and for those persons to submit the necessary documents to enable Ofsted to complete the vetting procedure and suitable persons interview; make the address and telephone number of the regulator (Ofsted) available to the parents via the complaints procedure; ensure that the staff know who to report child protection concerns to; ensure that the system for registration shows times of arrival and departure; obtain parents written consent prior to administering any medication; keep a record of any visitors; make the first aid certificate of at least one member of staff available for inspection. The first aid certificate should include training in first aid for infants and young children; produce a list of staff and confirm they are vetted; ensure that the written statement on behaviour management includes bullying; ensure that accessible individual records are kept on the premises containing the name and address of the staff members and information about recruitment, training and qualifications and to complete a risk assessment that is reviewed if there are significant changes or if the registered person suspects that it is no longer valid. All records and policies and procedures are now in place to ensure children's safety is maintained effectively.

The provider also agreed to organise refreshment times to promote children's independence and choice; make fresh drinking water available to the children at all times and to organise the use of time, space and staff to ensure there are appropriate opportunities for children to rest and play.

Drinking water is now available for children and children help themselves at snack time so their independence is well promoted. Staff also organise space and time so children have good opportunities to meet their needs for rest and play.

Complaints since the last inspection

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

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve outcomes for children by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework for observations and assessments
- review the statement on special needs so that it has regard to the Code of Practice (2001)
- ensure that parents receive basic written information about the setting and about policies and procedures that are available
- ensure that Ofsted are notified of any significant events, such as staff changes.

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