

## Date Submitted: 18 August 2016

### Your setting

In this section describe the main characteristics of your setting and the culture and backgrounds of the children who attend, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or speak English as an additional language.

Happy Children Nursery is a non-for profit nursery that is underpinned by an organic and Islamic ethos. The nursery occupies the lower level of Felicity House, a newly refurbished building that once operated as the church hall for the local St. Mary's church. The nursery is located in the Wavertree district of Liverpool, an area within the city which 15.7% of the ward is classed as the most deprived 10% neighbourhoods in the country. We are open 5 days a week for 51 weeks a year and operate between the hours of 8am- 6pm. The nursery caters for children between the ages of 12-60 months and is made up of 2 large rooms, one for children 12-36 months old and the other for children 36-60 months old. We have 3 child appropriate bathrooms located in different parts of our play rooms with each containing 2 toilets. We also have a kitchen and 2 outdoor spaces.

Currently we have 70 children on our register including 2 children undergoing an EHAT. Our children come from diverse backgrounds with parents originating from the UK, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Yemen, Somalia, Israel, Nigeria, Turkey and Senegal. We have 13 children on register that receive 2 year old funding (2YF) and 44 children on register that receive National Education Funding (NEF). We have 15 members of staff with the manager, deputy and Toddler Room leader holding a level 5 qualification and working towards her level 6 BA Hons in Early Years, 2 staff members hold a level 2 qualification, 4 hold a level 3 qualification, and 1 member of staff holds a level 6 qualification in a BA Hons in Education Studies and Early Years. We also have 3 students training with us, one is a second year BA Hons student studying Early Years Education.

The diverse backgrounds of our children mean that a high proportion of them speak English as an additional language, to help us best support these children in learning English we have recruited staff that also speak an array of languages. Between our staff members seven languages are spoken, English, Arabic, Urdu, Panjabi, French, German and Somali, with all apart from German being used to interact with children during the settling in process.

Our staff have undergone quite a lot of training over the last 18 months with both the manager and deputy completing a level 4 Montessori Diploma, a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services, both of them have also renewed their safeguarding training with the LSCB, the manager also studied a level 3 SENCO award entitled 'Supporting Individuals with Learning Difficulties (QCF), as well as studying a level 4 course entitled 'Coordinate Special Educational Needs Provision'. 2 members of staff have also attended 'Speech and Language' training which has resulted in investing £1000 in Speech and Language boxes and book bags. 1 member of staff has also attended a 6 week Block Play course.

We have experienced some issues that have hindered the smooth running of our setting with staffing being the most difficult issue. We find that we put a lot of effort into training staff who then inevitably become more employable and then move on to management positions in other nurseries. We have also had 3 members of staff leave us in the last 2 years due to becoming pregnant.

An example of the type of problems we face is a member of staff that was placed on an 18 month Montessori Diploma, a 6 week course entitled Building Blocks for Communication, Makaton training, and training with the National Portage Association over the course of 2 years has just left us just after our last Ofsted inspection due to family commitments. We have found that although the staff that attend training go on to share their new skills with other staff, when they leave the spirit of the principles that they learnt on their courses seems to be taken with them. This has meant that the manager and the deputy have had to take on a more direct role in the setting to help with consistency across board. We are also in the process of developing a training tool kit as a strategy that helps ensure new knowledge learned is embedded within the nursery. We have had a lot of support from the local authority with staff recruitment but it is difficult to find level 3 and above staff that have more than one year of experience behind them.

### Views of those who use your setting and those who work with you

This section should record:

- the views of the children who attend your setting and those of their parents or carers
- the views of any professionals who work with you, especially the local authority, your local children's centre or any health professionals
- details of any quality assurance scheme you participate in.

Include examples of the ways in which you seek views and any action you have taken to improve as a result of those views.

- \* PPA (Parent Practitioner Association)
- \* First day induction with parents / Settling in + listening to parents needs
- \* Parents Evening
- \* Key Person Time (Discussing with children)
- \* To and Fro books
- \* Learning Journeys
- \* Supervision
- \* Peer observations
- \* The Quality Improvement team
- \* Rag Rating
- \* Views of the professionals that work with us ( SENISS - The Special Educational Needs Inclusion Support Service, Speech and Language therapist and Educational Psychologists).

We believe parents and carers to be part of our team as they are their child's first educators, it is because of this that we encourage a two way flow of information between ourselves and parents in the form of the settling in process, learning journeys, parent's evenings, daily interactions during pickup and drop off times where key persons and parents exchange information and ideas with regards to children's learning and development. We ask parents for suggestion in the form of conversations and a parents suggestion board, some suggestions we have already implemented are Yoga classes, wild flower planting, and collecting for a local charity shop and running a conference on child development. We also believe the children that attend our setting are part of our team as their ideas and views provide us with much direction with regards to the daily running of the nursery, children's thoughts, ideas and interests help us plan our daily activities.

We have used a number of methods for seeking the views and opinions of children, parents, employees and other professionals that use the setting.

During Key Person time, circle time and other interactions with children practitioners ask children about how they felt with regards to certain activities, we also discuss the nursery setting and use their ideas, views and interests to help set up the nursery's play spaces, continuous provision and activities. We also observe the children and how they interact with different play spaces and use this information for our planning and the general development of the nursery

With regards to our parents/carers, we have set up a Parents, Practitioners Association (PPA) in which parents and practitioners meet to discuss current topics, interests and the further development of the setting as well as give us feedback about their children in relation to the nursery and their learning. Parents are given evaluation forms, our SEF to look at (the SEF is also available on our website to download) and give them access to a comments and suggestion box should they wish to suggest something to us indirectly. The to and fro books, children's learning journeys and parent evenings that are held twice a year also help us to gain insight into the views of the parents/carers of children that attend our setting. Furthermore we have strengthened our partnership with parents by using evaluation feedback forms, parents and children parties celebrating Festivals, and recently ran a parenting conference entitled 'The Whole Child' after many parents took interest in a Montessori course that was studied by three members of our staff and asked whether we could run a conference on child development.

We use 'The Early Years Quality Indicator' which is a self assessment tool that helps us evaluate how well our provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. We also participate in Liverpool City Council's Quality Improvement strategy and have been rag rated as amber, from a possible red, amber and green rating. Please note we previously held a green rating but were down graded after our last Ofsted inspection in which we were rated as "Requires Improvement". Part of this strategy offers us regular guidance and feedback in the form of a Lead Practitioner who holds either a QTS, EYP, EYTS. The lead practitioner has been helping us establish peer observations in our setting. Her feed back from a peer observation done with the manager whilst watching our circle time in the toddler room was that we needed to split the group to make it smaller and more manageable, she also suggested props that we could use after discussing with her our recent Ofsted inspection. We are currently working on implementing these suggestions in the setting.

We work with health professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and SENISS ( The Special Educational Needs Inclusion Support Service ) and take into consideration their observations and suggestions which we receive in the form of a report each time they visit the nursery in relation to a child.

Employees are provided with regular supervisions during which we evaluate our practice, share positive achievements, and set new targets. Regular group staff meetings and peer observations also help us as a team understand eachother's views and collaborate on ways to improve as a whole. The setting focuses heavily on having a happy workforce and a strong team ethic, to enhance this we have regular days out and in house training days where we work together as a group.

## Effectiveness of leadership and management

This section is about the effectiveness of your leadership and management; or if you are a childminder how well you organise your service. It covers:

- meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and other government requirements
- self-evaluation and improvement planning
- performance management and professional development
- safeguarding
- the curriculum
- your vision for the setting
- partnership working.

Peer observations, supervisions, feedback and staff meetings all help management create a culture of excellence within the setting. Staff also take part in the evaluation process in which we sit together as a whole team and work through a quality indicator tool to help us gain insight into areas we need to develop. During our staff meetings we discuss previous Ofsted reports and reports given to us by Liverpool's Quality Improvement Team and reflect about ways to improve our practice using their feedback. We also have a mailing group in which members of staff can share good practice that they may have read about as well as other relevant topics. Through our meetings and our quality improvement assessment tool we have developed a focused improvement plan that all staff work towards throughout the year, we also constantly review our plan during staff meetings, this helps us make successful step by step improvements to our setting and ensures that our plan becomes a working document rather than a paper exercise. Staff meetings also provide a platform for staff to discuss the impact that staff training has had upon the setting as a whole. The nursery also implements a mentoring system in which new members of staff are given a mentor to guide them through their first year of practice with us. The mentor system helps foster an environment in which we learn to work together as a team that helps each other and values one another, it also acts as a spring board in which staff grow confident in their new responsibilities and allows quality and practice to be consistent within the nursery, it also helps identify under-performance as well as put in place strategies to improve performance.

The management helps staff improve through quarterly supervisions during which they have the opportunity to discuss their own evaluation of their practice, as well as share positive achievements, and set new targets. Supervisions also help members of staff identify areas of development and gives the manager quality time with each staff member to listen to any potential barriers that they may have come across or encourage further professional development. Peer observations also help us as a team improve as it allows each individual to take a look at the practice of others and pause for thought with regards to their own practice. Peer observations also help us foster an environment of reflective practice, excellence, and consistency with our approach to helping children excel.

We plan our activities in our indoor and outdoor spaces so that our learning environment reflects the interests of children and meets their needs, one such example is our celebration of Sukkot and the building of a traditional Sukkah during the time that one of the Jewish families in our setting were celebrating this holiday. Another example is the building of a solar system after one of our children took an interest in space travel.

We meet the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundational Stage and other government requirements by using a tracker system in which we use a copy of the early years outcomes for each child highlighting their progress on a termly basis, each child also has a learning journey in which his/her progress is tracked, with the manager checking each child's progress every 6 weeks. The manager also monitors the children's progress in the form of tracking each individual child's milestones on a cohort sheet so that the nursery as a whole can identify particular patterns or gaps that may consistently appear in areas of learning.

We implement the government's PREVENT strategy and encourage British Values through using opportunities that arise in behaviour to help children understand the importance of being able to live together as a community that may be different but ultimately share the same values. An example of this is our emphasis on allowing children to make their own choices and then discussing with them why it is alright for us to choose different things, we also discuss the importance of respecting each others opinions and views. Furthermore we monitor the children's behaviour, comments and discussions during role play which helps us gain insight into the type of conversations that they may be having with parents at home. The manager has also delivered in-house training on British Values after receiving training from Liverpool City Council's Early Years Team.

The nursery currently has 5 children that receive the Early Years Pupils premium. Last year the Pupils Premium was been used to purchase a set of language boxes, book bags, and building block bags as all but of one of the children receiving the funding have problems in areas of Communication and Language, Literacy, or speak English as an additional language. We also purchased a CD player, CDs and headphones for one of the children who excels in all areas other than Expressive Arts and Design and in particular areas that involve music, rhythm and movement. Future Pupil's Premium will be used to train staff with an aim for 2 members of staff to gain the EYTS (Early Years Teaching Status) and help other members of staff gain insight into improving the quality of the setting.

### Your priorities for improvement.

Getting an EYTS in the setting.  
Staff Training and developing an assessment tool that helps us monitor impact of staff training.  
Improving the staffs understanding of Characteristics of Learning.  
Establishing regular peer observations.  
Organising space for low level displays.  
Organising times for reflective practice so that it becomes part of the culture of the nursery.

My practice is: **Good**

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

This section is about the effectiveness of your assessment and teaching mechanisms to ensure that children are showing characteristics of effective learning.

Our learning journeys help us assess our children's level of development. When children first begin with us we use the first 6 weeks to observe their level of development in all 7 areas of learning and development as laid out by the Early Years Outcomes. Each child is given an early years outcome's tracker in which their key person highlights their abilities and marks their next stages of development, a base line is determined for each area of learning and development and staff then develop planning according to this base line. At the end of the first 6 weeks a child's key person will write up an Initial Observation Form which highlights his developmental stage, this is then given to parents to read and sign. If there is a cause for concern with regards to children that may be behind in areas of learning the key person will call a meeting with the SENCO and then his/her parents and discuss these concerns. A play plan is then drawn up and targets put in place so that the gaps in the child's learning and development can be closed.

Every 6 weeks children are then observed and a focused long observation and 3 snap shot observations are done on each child, these observations tie into the tracker system which is updated every term, with children's progress being highlighted. The child's key person uses gaps that may appear in the tracker to inform for future planning and next steps, these along with a child's interests help staff members organise the nursery's continuous provision, plan activities, circle times and key person times. Learning journey's are sent home every 6 weeks for parents to look at and comment upon, the learning journey's also contain practical advice for parents to set activities at home to enhance their child's learning, this encourages parents to be active in their child's learning and development. The learning journeys and tracker system helps us identify areas of concern with regards to a child's learning and development quite early on, concerns are then taken to a monthly consortia meeting where the manager meets with a team of Early Years health professions such a member from the SENISS team, an educational psychologist, and a speech and language therapist. An EHAT may be raised under the direction of our SENCO , if this is the case, we use professionals to help us write up a focused play plan for the child involved.

We support children to develop the characteristics of effective learning through our observations which highlight the type of learning that took place during a particular observed activity, over time a child's key person finds patterns in the child's learning and then plans accordingly to help the child reach his next milestones in the areas of development using information about the type of learner he/she may be.

After learning journeys go to and from parents and practitioners for a period of 4 and a half months, parents meet with their child's key person during a parents evening and discuss their child's progress and ways to support their child's further development at home. We take on board parents comments and suggestions that are exchanged during the parents evening. Our learning journeys are informative and colourful (due to the photographs within them), but most of all they provide a window for parents into the areas of learning and development that is easy for them to read and understand and therefore support their child. We support parents that do not speak or read and write English through helping translate their child's outcomes and ways they can support their child at home. We also help such parents understand the importance of supporting their child through their early years of learning.

We encourage equality of opportunity in all areas by allowing all children regardless of religion, race, gender or disability to access all activities, equipment and materials in the nursery. We gently remind parents and carers of these ethics when the likes of well intended parents or carers prevent their sons from playing with dolls or dresses in the home corner or their daughters from getting involved in rough and tumble play.

We encourage children to be active in their learning through getting them involved in choosing activities to use or themes of learning to incorporate into lesson plans, we also adapt



activities, resources and routines based on observations of children, this at times leads to changing our plans for the day.

### Your priorities for improvement.

Ensuring that the children's interests and ideas are tied in with the planning - Increased Child's Voice.  
Ensure parents suggestions and ideas are tied in with planning  
Ensuring that staff are consistent with monitoring the characteristics of effective leaning and then plan effectively.  
Ensuring staff are using methods for sustained shared thinking and the language of thought.  
Enriching the continuous provision.  
Introduce forest school play to the nursery - Staff to be trained in this.

My practice is: **Good**

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

This section is about helping children feel emotionally secure and ensuring children are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy. It is also about ensuring that children are prepared for learning, they attend regularly, and become self-aware, confident learners.

Each child is allocated a key person when he/she first registers at our setting. The child is then introduced to the setting and his/her key person by a parent/career. The parent will stay to help settle the child for the first few days at the setting, during this time the key person forms bonds with the child in the security of a parent being on hand. Once a bond between the key person and child has begun to form, the parent will then leave the child with the key person for a short period of time (from 15min-hour) explaining that they will be back to pick them up. The hours without the presence of a parent are built up so that the child can stay in the setting for a whole session without becoming upset. During this settling in period the key person uses an 'All about me' form which is filled out by parents upon registration to help the child settle using his/her interests, comfort toys or reading a child's favourite book. It is only when a secure attachment has been formed between the child and the key person that we consider the child settled, for most children this takes up to 2 weeks but has been known on occasions especially with very young children to take up to one month.

Each Key Person is responsible for the nappy changing and toileting needs of their own children as well as their focused observations and planning their next steps. Our preschool room also has a daily key person time which the children sit as a smaller group with their key person, all of this is part of our strategy to create strong emotional attachments between a child and his/her key person.

We use snack and food times to speak to the children about healthy eating and the impact of certain foods upon our bodies, we also have yoga and exercise sessions in an upstairs hall and discuss with the children the impact exercise has on our bodies. We speak to children about staying safe in a variety of ways, whilst visiting our local library, park and church we speak about road safety and stranger danger. We also discuss staying safe within our circle times, key person times and during the year plan lessons around staying safe. We include, in our daily working with children, giving them an awareness of how to assess risks in our indoor and outdoor spaces.

We chase up attendance of children that are absent with a text, if a child's absence lasts more than a week we call the parents. During parent's evenings we emphasis the importance of regular attendance, and demonstrate to parents though the use of their child's learning journey and tracker the impact irregular attendance has upon a child's learning and development.

We encourage independence in our nursery through allowing our children to serve themselves and clear away during lunch, dinner and snack times. Everything in the nursery is accessible to children, with us allowing free access to all materials with only some teachers resources such as our language boxes being placed on high shelving. We also have low level sinks for hand washing, helping yourself to water and for cleaning up the paint pots so that the children become independent in all areas of learning. We also have dressing frames and other practical life activities which help the children attain independence in dressing themselves, pouring their own water or milk, in feeding themselves and so on. Furthermore we have toilets in different areas of our nursery rooms which the children access independently.

We help children transition to primary school by speaking about going to 'Big School' during circle time and key person time. We also ensure that children become independent in their toileting and self care needs and work with parents in developing a strategy for school readiness. In the pre-school room many activities involve children working in groups, turn taking, putting up their hand to answer a question and so on. In the pre-school room children also learn to become more confident through helping to make choices during circle time (such as choosing what song the group should sing) and at times leading the group in an activity or a song.

We incorporate the use of sand timers in every day play to encourage the children to take turns. The timers give children a tangible and concrete understanding that their turn will come after a period of waiting and also encourage a child playing with a toy to consider that another child has been waiting for a reasonable period of time to play with the same piece of equipment or toy.

We encourage children to explore their environment by using the whole of the indoor and outdoor space to set up activities that entice children to explore different parts of the nursery. We use the children's interests to inform us with regards to this.

We tackle poor behaviour by having a clear strategy in place that is followed consistently by all the staff. This is done through helping children that cannot manage their behaviour take 60 seconds - three minutes time out, to think about their actions, we also help the child after this time to discuss his/her emotions and then support him/her in saying sorry. We discuss appropriate behaviour, sharing, caring, forgiving, turn taking and the like during circle times and key person times and incorporate how to manage feelings and emotions in our everyday discussions with children. We also speak to children about differences that we all have as human beings and how these differences should be celebrated, we have a world map in the setting in which we display the flags of the countries of origin of all the children in our setting so that children begin to understand that the nursery is made up of people from all over the world.

### Your priorities for improvement.

Chasing up Attendance  
Social Preparation for school transitions : School uniforms for dress up area / Pictures of local schools  
Stronger links with primary schools/ school visits with key person.  
Settling in of younger children.

My practice is: **Good**

### Outcomes for children

This section is about the progress of different groups of children from their starting points.

When children first begin with us we use the first 6 weeks to observe their level of development in all 7 areas of learning and development as laid out by the Early Years Outcomes. Each child is given an early years outcome's tracker in which their key person highlights their abilities and marks their next stages of development, a base line is determined as a starting point for each area of learning and development and staff then develop planning according to this base line. At the end of the first 6 weeks a child's key person will write up an Initial Observation Form which highlights his developmental stage, this is then given to parents to read, comment upon and sign. If there is a cause for concern with regards to children that may be behind in areas of learning the key person will call a meeting with his/her parents and discuss these concerns. The key person may also hold a meeting with the SENCO to gauge whether early intervention is needed.

Every 6 weeks children are then observed and a focused long observation and 3 snap shot observations are written up on each child, these observations tie into the tracker system which is updated every term, with children's progress being highlighted as they attain specific goals. The tracker allows the key person and the manager to keep track of progress and monitor whether the child is moving steadily towards the early learning goals. The child's key person uses gaps that may appear in the tracker to inform for future planning and next steps, these along with a child's interests help staff members plan the nursery's continuous provision, planned activities, circle times and key person times. The learning journey and tracker system helps us identify areas of concern with regards to a child's learning and development quite early on, this aids in the process of putting early intervention in place. Any concerns a key person may have are discussed with the SENCO and may be then taken to a monthly consortia meeting where the manager meets with a team of Early Years health professions such as someone from the SENISS team, an educational psychologist, and speech and language therapist. An EHAT may be raised under the direction of our SENCO. If need be under the guidance of the SENCO a play plan is developed by the key person and parents of the child. The play plan provides children with a step by step plan of easily attainable targets that together lead over a period of time to attaining a larger target.

We support children to develop using a cycle of observation, analysis and planning for next steps. Our observations highlight the type of learning that takes place during the observed

activity, over time a child's key person finds patterns in the child's learning that inform her/him about characteristics of the child's learning. The key person uses all this information to plan accordingly to help the child reach his next milestones in the 7 areas of development.

We challenge children so that their learning is not stagnant, through challenging children and having high expectations of their capabilities we are able to help them constantly progress towards their learning goals. We use children's interests to help them stay as motivated and excited as possible, we also ask children to help us with planning activities and get them involved with organisation of the day.

We ask children to evaluate activities that may have gone wrong such as, 'Why do you think the material did not stick on the box?' or 'What do you think we have to do to so that the train goes all around the track?' To help children become creative learners we ensure that we have a good supply of an array of art and craft materials on our 'Help Yourself Trolley' and that everything is fully accessible to children throughout the day.

In our toddler room children are encouraged to be independent in their self care and providing that there are no developmental delays we ensure that they are potty trained before entering the pre-school room. This allows for the child's key person in the pre-school room to concentrate on other areas of learning and development. To help the child prepare for school the pre-school room ensures that gaps that may have appeared in the areas of learning and development are closed with a special focus being placed on the primary areas.

#### Your priorities for improvement.

More school readiness

Develop a system in which we can take a look at the progress of whole nursery at a glance and easily notice areas of learning that are particularly weak across the board. Allow this to inform for future staff training.

My practice is: **Good**

#### Overall Effectiveness

This section brings together the evaluation of all aspects of your practice, including teaching and safeguarding, your identified priorities for improvement and the grades you have awarded yourself.

#### Any further comments you wish to include

The safeguarding and welfare requirements in our setting are met through a variety of different methods. Both the manager and the deputy manager have received direct safeguarding training from the LSCB, the manager has also developed her own safeguarding children's handbook for staff which is specific to our nursery's needs. She also delivers interactive in house training to all the staff every 6 months. We have developed several questions and answer sheets for our staff to answer after reading through our Safeguarding Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy, Safer Practice with Technology Policy, E-Safety and Networking, Digital Images Policy and Child Protection Policy.

Our setting strives to meet the needs of all the children who attend including any children who may need additional support. We have worked closely with speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and our local SENISS in order to gain insight into the best way to help children in our care.

We use children's engagement in activities and how motivated they are in participating in activities to determine whether they feel secure and happy in our setting. We also use their learning journeys, observations, trackers as well as feedback from parents and the children themselves to help inform us of each child's personal, social, and emotional security.

The overall quality and standards of my early years provision (is): **Good**

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