



Ashgrove Farm Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	304959
Inspection date	27 September 2006
Inspector	Gillian Sutherland
Setting Address	Ashgrove Farm, Wrexham Road, Chester, Cheshire, CH4 7QR
Telephone number	01244 680707
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Registered person	Alison Dixon, Jacqueline Adley and Terry Adley
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ashgrove Farm Nursery is privately owned. It opened in 2000 and operates from six rooms in a purpose built building. It is situated on the outskirts of Chester. A maximum of 58 children may attend the nursery and after school facility at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 51 weeks of the year. The out of school and holiday club operates from a newly, purpose built building within the grounds of the day nursery. The out of school club is open from 07.30 to 09.00 and from 15.00 to 18.30 for 51 weeks of the year. The Holiday Club is open from 07.30 to 18.30 during school holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 81 children aged from birth to under eight years on roll. Of these, nine children receive funding for nursery education.

The nursery employs 16 members of staff, of whom 15 work directly with the children. There are 14 staff who hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Co-ordinator at Sure Start. They are also members of the National Day Nursery Association and '4 Kids'.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within a healthy environment. All staff ensure that children's health is given due consideration through the effective procedures that they have securely in place. For example, the toys and equipment are checked to ensure that they are clean and are safe for the children's use and the tables are covered with wipe clean tablecloths before snacks and meals are served. The older children are beginning to understand the need to keep themselves healthy. They are encouraged to wash their hands after certain activities, such as visiting the toilet. They are also encouraged to wash their hands before eating food. Parents also provide a toothbrush and toothpaste if required for their child to use after they have eaten their lunch. A detailed sick child policy, which is shared with parents and carers, ensures that children are cared for within an environment which is as free from infection as possible.

Babies and young children are cared for according to their individual needs. These individual requirements are well known to the staff. All babies and young children have their individual routines, such as sleeping, feeding and nappy changing adhered to. Staff ensure good hygiene procedures are in place, this enhances children's health and well-being.

Children enjoy healthy snacks and drinks mid-morning and afternoon. They are routinely offered milk or water, which are healthier options, however, children are unable to freely access drinking water safely. Children are learning the importance of healthy eating, through the provision of healthy foods and drinks. Snack times are made into social occasions for children as staff sit with them and talk to the children about the different fruits and food they are eating. Older children are encouraged to give out the lunches to the other children but are not supported in developing their independence and physical skills by pouring their own drinks.

Children's physical development is well provided for and they have regular opportunities to participate in physical activities either indoors or outside. Staff plan physical activities daily, whereby children's good physical health is encouraged and their large and small motor skills are well developed. An example of this was observed as children used outdoor equipment skilfully, such as balls to catch and throw. Children also used the small blocks which they walked along, and were supported by staff in case they lost their balance. The children develop their fine motor skills as they access and use small tools skilfully, for example, scissors, the computer and cutlery. Children also enjoy walks in the country lanes that run alongside the nursery garden, and here they collect leaves and other objects of interest which they bring back to nursery and use in the play activities. Another activity observed which most of the children participating enjoyed was the parachute game and here children's listening skills are developed as they wait for the instructions from the staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a well planned and organised environment, which contributes to their satisfactory learning, development and enjoyment. Staff make good use of the available space by offering children a wide range of activities and play experiences, both inside and outdoors. This is well organised prior to the children's arrival inviting their full participation. The environment is welcoming to the children as they are able to see the work that they have completed placed on display. Children arrive happy, excited and eager to participate, quickly involving themselves in the activities offered.

Children access a wide range of toys and equipment on a daily basis. Resources are used well to support an interesting programme of themes and activities. The registered provider adds to the range of toys and materials on a regular basis. Toys and equipment are regularly checked for safety and hygiene ensuring children are safe at all times. Older and more able children make choices and self-select toys and equipment which supports their growing independence.

Children are cared for within a safe environment because staff generally follow the safety policies and procedures, to ensure children's safety at all times. One practice which compromises children's safety is that hot drinks for the staff were taken into the playrooms when children were moving about. Risk assessments are completed to ensure the building is safe for children's use. Children are encouraged to develop an understanding of the importance of keeping themselves safe, through discussion with staff and for the older children timely reminders about the importance of holding the hand rail when going up and down the stairs. Children have a clear understanding of what to do in the event of a fire because they regularly participate in fire drill practices. These practices, which are recorded, are held on a monthly basis, on different days of the week and at different times during the day.

Children's welfare is safeguarded appropriately because staff have a clear understanding of the procedures to be followed regarding child protection. A written Local Safeguarding Children Board policy and procedure is shared with staff, parents and carers and includes the telephone numbers of the local social services directorate or the police.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled at the setting. They enter the nursery happily and quickly leave their parents to play with their friends. Staff produce plans throughout the nursery to ensure all of the children take part in a range of interesting play and learning opportunities. Children are engaged in a range of purposeful activities.

Children freely choose from a wide variety of toys and equipment and staff ensure that such resources are easily accessible. For the very young children this means placing toys and equipment around the room at their level, which ensures they are within their reach. Children move well from one activity to another, chatting away to one another, with the very young ones babbling away.

Children are developing a good sense of belonging. Children are confident and eager to learn, embracing new ideas as they take part in a variety of stimulating activities. They excitedly chat to members of staff and to each other as they play with the leaves they have collected, in a tray of warm, soapy water. This encourages discussion about the texture of the leaves before and after they had been immersed in the water. The children take an interest in wildlife, as they have an environmental garden where they watch the birds feed and they have also grown some of their own vegetables including peppers, tomatoes and herbs.

Children receive lots of support, encouragement and contact from the staff. This means that all children feel emotionally secure in the care of a small number of familiar adults. The staff are knowledgeable about the children and they use this information well to meet their personal needs. The children enjoy a range of activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. Babies show great delight as they listen to rattles making different sounds, and they examine these closely to try and understand where the sound is coming from. Staff are increasing their knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have just devised profiles for each child under three years old.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals, due to the staff having an awareness of the six areas of learning. Effective planning and record keeping assists the staff to provide new and stimulating play activities. Staff responsible for the educational programme have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this well to ensure that every area of the curriculum is covered. Staff provide children with a varied range of activities which they thoroughly enjoy. Activities are set out in such a way that children are able to self-select the resources they want to play with or the activities they wish to participate in. This enables children to have choices and make decisions for themselves. They can also return to the activities that they enjoy and gain the most from.

Children eagerly participate in registration time, where each child has the opportunity to develop their language skills as the older children in this nursery access basic French lessons and the staff greet the children by saying Bonjour and the children respond appropriately. Children are confident communicators, as they engage readily in conversations. They interact with one another and with the staff caring for them as they talk about what they are doing throughout the daily routines. They approach visitors confidently, showing their ability to initiate relationships and to communicate with adults.

Children are excited and enjoy using the dressing up clothes. This is an activity which they thoroughly enjoyed and one child dressed as a nurse and equipped with the nurses bag insisted on taking the member of staff's temperature, she then listened to her heartbeat before giving her some Calpol. This activity provides children with an opportunity to extend their use of language and their knowledge and understanding of the environment.

Children have good access to books throughout the day. They are also given the opportunity to choose library books for themselves, from the mobile library which visits the nursery on a regular basis. Children enjoy sitting reading books alone and in small groups.

Children are able to recognise their names and some children can also write their name. Children have some opportunities for writing during play, although more formal supervised writing sessions are also utilised, where the children are taught about letters, including the writing and recognising of their own names.

Children have a good understanding of number values and clearly enjoy singing number rhymes and songs, many of which contain an element of simple calculation. Children enjoy their music and movement sessions which are provided on a weekly basis by an external company. They are also provided with the opportunity to develop their understanding about opposites. For example, the children are asked to compare different instruments, and those that are played quietly with those that are played loudly.

All children are provided with many opportunities to promote their creativity, and their personal self-esteem is raised, as they proudly display and talk about their art and craft work.

At the time of the inspection children present had only been in the pre-school rooms for approximately two weeks, therefore, they were unable to provide any current children's profiles being used to indicate their progress and development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children access the range of resources and equipment providing they are appropriate for their age and ability. Staff are knowledgeable about children's individual needs. These are well met in practice by familiar and consistent caring staff.

The children are developing a good understanding of their local community and the wider world through planned activities. Children celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year which incorporate different nationalities, for example, opportunities to dress up in national dress as they celebrate Diwali or Chinese New Year. Positive images are displayed attractively around the environment.

Children's behaviour is generally good. They understand the need for safe boundaries, both indoors and outside. They have an understanding of basic rules, enabling them to feel safe. This is supported by the behaviour management policy and the systems implemented by the staff. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff, for their efforts and achievements. They are polite, share the resources and take turns easily, showing consideration for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good quality information on their child and the setting, which includes daily verbal handovers on children's interests and achievements. Notice board displays and information given to parents ensure they are well informed about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. This helps to keep parents up to date on the learning objectives for their children. Clear communication is established from the outset with parents. In addition, parents receive regular newsletters and the informative notice board keeps them well informed of any developments. Children's development and progress is observed, monitored and recorded and parents are fully aware

they have access to these records at any time. This ensures parents are able to contribute to their child's care.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Detailed policies and procedures are in place and these are available to parents at any time. All the legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is satisfactorily in place, including accident, medication and incident records. This helps to maintain children's safety and promotes their welfare.

The good staffing ratios improve the quality of care for all the children. Staff work with the children consistently on a daily basis, ensuring they are fully supported with their learning and development needs.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. Staff, children and parents all benefit from the well organised systems in place. The provider and staff ensure that parents are informed of the activities on offer and this includes details of the current theme, to which the daily activities for children in the different age groups are linked. Staff keep themselves updated through regular access to training and ongoing personal development is promoted.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider has addressed the recommendations made at the last inspection and now ensures that all documentation relating to accidents, medication are maintained and she has in place a statement relating to Special Needs and a complaints policy and procedure. The provider has also addressed the health and safety issues raised and she has improved her operational procedures by implementing a key worker system, ensuring that staff evaluate the activities available to children and improving the storage of resources and equipment.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted

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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):

- consider how children's independence can be developed and ensure they can freely access drinking water at any time
- ensure children's safety is not compromised by staff having hot drinks in the play rooms

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):

- ensure that children's profiles which indicate their progress and development in accordance with the Early Years Curriculum are completed.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk