



Alcester Nursery Studio

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	591005
Inspection date	17 July 2006
Inspector	Ann Doreen Burford
Setting Address	Hannah Susan Greig Memorial Hall, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire, B49 6AD
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Registered person	Alcester Nursery School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Alcester Nursery it opened in 2001 at these premises and was previously registered at another address since 1985. It is situated in a studio portable building within the grounds of the Greig Memorial Hall in the market town of Alcester. An additional room in the main building situated across the car park is also used. A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery opens from 08.00 to 17.30, Monday to Friday term time only. There are currently 80 children aged from

two to under eight on roll. Of these, 40 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also has procedures to support children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery offers a before and after school service delivering and collecting children from local schools. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The nursery employs 10 members of staff. Of these, eight including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting has completed the quality assurance scheme 'Aiming for Quality'.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which support their understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. Good hygiene procedures are followed by children and staff. The toilet area is easily accessed by children with all facilities being at child height. This means children soon learn how to take care of their own personal needs independently. After washing their hands children and staff use an anti-bacterial gel to further reduce the risk of infection. The children access this for themselves and because they understand the need for high standards of personal cleanliness are developing commendable standards of personal hygiene. Children also help with appropriate tasks to keep the room and equipment clean and tidy. When children are taken ill, they are well cared for and every step is taken to minimise the risk of cross infection. An area with some cushions is available for children to rest. Children are protected from the harmful effects of the sun in hot weather because staff are pro-active in their approach. They ensure children wear sun hats and staff have written permission to apply sun cream. The older children are learning how to apply this for themselves and show a clear understanding of why they need to protect themselves during the hot weather and the consequences of what happens if they do not. Areas of shade are provided in the outdoor classroom.

All the children enjoy the well organised lunch and snack times. Young children sit in a group with staff so they learn good social manners and are encouraged to try healthy snacks of fresh fruit. A snack area is created where older children can self-select from a range of fresh fruit. Each piece of fruit is neatly stored in its own small container to keep it fresh. Children regularly pour themselves a drink and often pour one for each other as they are aware of the importance of drinking regularly. Children with food allergies or requiring special diets are well catered for. Parents provide the packed lunch which is stored safely. Information is provided to help parents provide healthy contents in the children's lunch boxes. Children attending before school are provided with toast for breakfast. The children attending after school are given a wider choice of healthy snacks including yoghurt and fresh fruit. This means most children are starting to understand which foods are healthy.

Children benefit from the opportunities for daily fresh air and exercise on a rota basis

because the area cannot be accessed directly from the playroom. The area is well planned to create an outdoor classroom. It is divided into four distinctive areas. These include opportunities for children to use their imaginations as they build, dig, explore and play. An additional conservation area is currently under development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure indoor and outdoor environment. A staff member always stands at the door to maintain security when children arrive and are collected. She also warmly greets the children and parents. There is a formal registration system and an additional one where children find their own photograph on a cardboard teddy bear and give to a staff member as they self-register. There is an excellent system in place for the safe collection of children. Anyone with permission to collect a child has their photograph taken to ensure they are easily identified by staff. This means children are well protected and kept safe.

Despite the premises being old and well used every effort is made to make it child-friendly. Staff work extremely hard to set out activities. Because the premises are also used by the local community staff have to arrange the room every morning and clear everything away every evening. The layout of the room creates a very attractive, stimulating area for the children. Furniture and equipment is well arranged to enable children to move freely and safely. Children independently select activities from a wide range of high quality toys and equipment which meet safety requirements. The child height storage units enable children to self-select toys safely. All safety features are in place including safety gates and smoke alarms. Children regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure. Risk assessments are completed and a visual daily check takes place. However, immediate action is not always taken to remove broken items from the outdoor area.

Children's welfare is mostly safeguarded because staff have a good understanding of child protection signs and symptoms. All staff are aware of their duties in relation to child protection and have attended appropriate training. There is a detailed written policy on child protection but it does not fully reflect current guidance on how to keep children safe if there is an allegation made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and warm caring relationships between adults and children are evident. This is achieved because of the effective key worker system and appropriate grouping of children. All children are involved in a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and overall learning. The children's self-confidence is promoted by having clear and consistent expectations and trust. Children are valued and appreciated by the staff. All staff have a very good knowledge of child development and regularly access relevant training. They have a strong commitment to continue to develop their own knowledge of childcare and

education. The staff working with the younger children are actively using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to complete younger children's individual assessments and plans. This means children's individual routines, needs and preferences are identified so a continuity of care is offered to enable children to feel secure and nurtured.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The effectiveness of curriculum planning and assessment for all funded children is very good. The staff plan interesting activities, which they adapt to meet individual needs and interests. As a result, children are motivated and make many good links in their learning. Children are captivated by an extensive range of stimulating, relevant activities. All children are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. Their social skills and manners are exceptional. Frequent re-enforcement of this is achieved through the use of posters and practice. For example, children spontaneously help others and when thanked they reply "you are welcome". Children are confident speakers and good listeners. They have regular access to a broad range of books and listen avidly to stories read by staff especially when using story boards. The boards are also enthusiastically used by the children. They use the illustrations to tell familiar stories and songs. Children use phonics well and some can sound out simple words including their own names. Many children are confident emergent writers and give meaning to their mark-making.

Children can count confidently and show increasing skill in recognising and using numbers and numerals to support their play. They match, sort and are using mathematical language such as one more, one less to help them to solve problems across a wide range of practical activities, such as stories and rhymes. Children love a challenge and enjoy problem-solving. They participate in many activities to promote their knowledge and understanding of the local community and the wider world. They frequently visit the local village and enjoy learning about other cultures through interesting activities. Children thoroughly enjoy the outdoor classroom area where they use a variety of tools and natural materials. The enclosed garden is divided so each area offers a different challenge for children. All the children are keen to go outside and fully participate in a range of activities to develop their physical skills as they climb, build their own obstacle course, dig and use the range of sit-on toys. Children respond excitedly to a wide range of creative activities. They use their imagination very well during role-play and drama. They particularly enjoy playing in the home-corner. Children take great pride in their creations which are displayed around the premises.

Overall, children make excellent progress in all areas of learning. This is recorded in photographs, children's work and written assessments, which link well to the stepping stones. Plans cover all six areas of learning for the indoor and outdoor environment. Staff attractively present children's records and share them with parents at regular formal parent meetings. There is a comprehensive range of resources within the play space covering all areas of development which is constantly being expanded. Activities provided are challenging and stimulating. Adults consistently and positively interact with the children to encourage their interest, involvement and learning. There are strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Staff

work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure children reach their full potential. Children who have English as an additional language are given full support. Staff achieve a balance between supervised activities and allowing children the freedom to initiate their own learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children have a strong sense of belonging and of their own identity within the group. A keyworker system is in place so children can build a bond with the staff. Children soon develop a strong sense of belonging in the nursery because of the flexible settling-in sessions and the extensive range of photographs displayed indoors and outdoors. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported so they fully participate in the life of the setting. Additional support and advice is sought when necessary to help all children reach their full potential. Children participate in a range of activities to promote their understanding of others within the group and the wider outside community. They frequently participate in theme days when they can learn about different cultures and festivals through a range of practical activities. The displays and equipment create a colourful, enriched environment where children can see an extensive range of images that promote equal opportunities.

Children's understanding of the rules and how they should behave is given strong emphasis throughout the term. This works well as children's behaviour is usually very good. Children are helped to develop their own strategies to resolve conflict without confrontation. They understand and follow the rules within the setting. They are also thoughtful and caring towards each other. Children's self-esteem is very well promoted. For example, graduation day is held for children leaving to go to school where they can celebrate their achievements, their faces beaming with a sense of pride. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Relationships with parents are very friendly. Staff make parents welcome and share a wealth of relevant information items with them. There is a parents' notice board which is regularly updated and includes items of news in regard to the setting as well as more general information items about childcare and education. A web site is available to help parents access information about the nursery. Parents are extremely well informed about their child's progress and how the assessment of their child is organised. Each child has a booklet called 'All about me'. Staff and parents can record information about the child on what they can do and any other relevant information. In this way parents can get involved in the decisions of how to help their child take the next step in their progress. This means that children receive consistent high quality care and education.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is enhanced because of the expertise of staff, the good quality organisation and the very good leadership and management of nursery education. There is a low turnover of staff enabling them to become a well-established team. Appraisal systems are in place and are effective in monitoring staff performance and ensuring training needs are met. This means all the children benefit from richer experiences and make good progress in their all round development and learning. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development. The key worker system is effective and the staff get to know the children extremely well. The staff are particularly skilled at interacting with the children, responding to them and listening to their ideas. The room is very well organised to meet the needs of the different age groups as well as providing a wealth of learning experiences.

There are many detailed documents in place. The record keeping is thorough to ensure parents are kept informed and the children's well-being is promoted. All of the required documentation is readily available and stored securely.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The leadership of the setting is inspirational and well organised. Where a weakness in provision has been identified the staff and management board work together to improve that particular area as they constantly strive to provide best practice. The management board are pro-active in their support of staff and implement innovative ideas. Staff are well motivated and are fully supported in accessing ongoing relevant training. All the staff and management frequently evaluate the provision of the care and education and continually strive for improvement. The management board and staff are committed to high standards of care and education in which every child matters and this is reflected in them achieving endorsement from a quality assurance scheme overseen by the Pre-school Learning Alliance. Systems are well developed to evaluate and monitor staff performance and development and the effect the nursery programme has on children's progress. This ensures the nursery fulfils its vision to provide a high quality standard of care for all children and provides maximum learning opportunities. Staff work as an effective team and all are very good role-models.

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 make some improvements to the premises. These included making the heaters safe, improving the hand washing facilities and the supervision of children at lunch times. These have been fully addressed and have improved the health and safety of the children. There are new heaters, hot water is now available in the children's toilets and the deployment of staff has been improved at lunch times. They were also asked to develop a procedure to be followed should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff. This is included in the procedures file but it does not fully follow the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to improve children's access to numerals in the outdoor area. Large numerals are clearly displayed and children use them in their play as they develop their understanding of mathematical

concepts.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been one complaint made to Ofsted since April 1 2004. An anonymous complaint was received relating to National Standard 2 (Organisation); Standard 6 (Safety); and Standard 11 (Behaviour) concerning allegations that staff: child ratios were not maintained on outings and that children on outings were not adequately supervised. Ofsted wrote to the provider requiring a written response to the concerns with supporting evidence of policies and procedures. The provider's response detailed how the concerns were investigated and the provider's conclusion was that no evidence was found to support the allegations. Policies and procedures provided were appropriate. The provider also stated that additional observation and supervision of staff would be undertaken in order to monitor the details of the complaint. Ofsted intend no action and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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 action is always taken to protect children from identified hazards in the outdoor area
- update the child protection policy to reflect the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance.

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 *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk