



Avoncroft Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY341319
Inspection date	22 February 2007
Inspector	Rachel Wyatt
Setting Address	Stoke Heath Community Art Centre, Redditch Road, Stoke Heath, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 4JN
Telephone number	07749 744 553
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Registered person	Avoncroft Pre-School Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Avoncroft Pre-School Nursery opened in 2006, having originally opened in 1984. It is managed by a partnership. The nursery operates from one room of a self-contained building with adjacent outside toilet facilities and is located on the south side of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. The nursery serves the local area. A maximum of 16 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00 every morning and 12:15 to 14:45 for pre-school sessions on Tuesday and Thursday. There are toddler sessions when parents can stay with their children. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area and children go on local walks or outings.

There are currently 32 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Support is available for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

Three partners and seven volunteers work with the children. All partners have a level three qualification and four other adults have relevant early years qualifications, including two who are qualified teachers. The nursery has the support of a mentor teacher from the local authority, and is regularly represented at local providers' forums and early years' partnership group meetings. The setting is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in a comfortable and inviting setting. Staff ensure areas and surfaces are kept clean, and children contribute towards this by wiping their feet and removing outdoor footwear when they return from playing in the garden.

Children's independence in seeing to their personal care is fostered very well. Toilets are separate from the main room so that children are accompanied by adults for their safety. However, children quickly become self-reliant. Well-organised regular hand washing routines ensure children clearly understand the importance of good hygiene. Staff ensure communal hand washing water and hand towels are changed regularly, and liquid soap, paper towels and running water are available in the toilet area. They manage other aspects of their personal care well, such as changing shoes and putting on outdoor clothing.

Children's health and dietary needs are clearly understood as the setting seeks relevant information from parents. Children are well looked after should they need medication or have an accident. Qualified first aiders are present at each session and parents have given their consent to the setting seeking emergency medical advice and treatment. Appropriate accident and medication records are maintained and signed by parents. Risks of cross infection are minimised should children be unwell as the setting's sick children procedures are made known to parents from the outset. Children understand about drinking from their named water bottle and to use a tissue to wipe their noses in order to reduce the spread of germs.

Children enjoy regular energetic outside play. They use a range of equipment and apparatus with increasing control and awareness of space. They kick, catch and throw balls with growing accuracy. Indoors children move in different ways, for instance during fun music and movement sessions, and they often use the trampoline, enjoying jumping high. The setting also ensures children have opportunities for relaxation and rest during quieter activities and good use is made of the cosy book area.

Children are well nourished. The nursery works with parents to ensure children have fruit at snack times. Children are very independent, confidently pouring out their drinks and using different utensils. They like to try different foods, such as two types of noodles, prawn crackers and spring rolls when finding out about Chinese New Year celebrations. As part of their focus on the letter 'O' children try oranges, orange juice and toast with marmalade during snack time. Children attending at lunch time manage their lunch box contents well. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy options and the setting sends home leaflets about healthy eating. Children have plenty to drink. Water and milk are provided at snack time, and drinking water is freely

available in children's named water bottles so that, for example, older children had a drink after energetic outside play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is assured as adults working with them ensure all areas are secure and free from hazards. The setting's comprehensive health and safety procedures are effectively followed. Risk assessments are used well to monitor all areas of the premises, and outings are well managed to ensure children's safety, comfort and enjoyment. Any concerns are dealt with promptly so that, for example, the setting has made various improvements regarding premises security and fire safety. These include reducing displays and storage of paper in the kitchen, and revising arrangements for fire practices.

Children are well supervised but without inhibiting their exploration or opportunities to try new challenges. Staff ensure children understand about safe behaviour, such as keeping a safe distance when using the slide or climbing frame, and being aware of others whilst helping to tidy up. As part of their accident procedures adults discuss the consequences of certain incidents with children to highlight safety issues. Children use sturdy good quality equipment, furniture and toys. Children learn how to use tools, such as scissors, correctly. Toys and equipment are checked regularly, and there is a programme for updating these and replacing any faulty items.

Children are safeguarded as the nursery has clear procedures regarding their protection. Staff have access to relevant local and national guidance, and they are proactive about monitoring children's well-being and raising any concerns about their welfare. Accident and incident recording and effective collection procedures also contribute to children's safety. Staff sensitively introduce children to issues relating to their personal safety and welfare during discussions and activities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the setting by friendly caring staff. They allow plenty of time to settle younger or less confident children, encouraging parents to stay for a short while if they wish to do so. As a result children soon become involved in the inviting range of activities. The strong emphasis on exploratory and imaginative play reflects the ethos of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children are imaginative and creative, enjoying different painting techniques and collage. They play musical instruments and move in different ways during singing and dance sessions. There is a real buzz of activity as they play with dough, explore sand, role play in the home corner, make models or cut up and glue different materials.

Children are self-motivated and readily decide what they want to do. Activities and toys are well set out so that children can see what is available and help themselves. They often play and explore toys set out on child-height surfaces or in accessible storage. Staff are attentive and take an active part in children's play, helping them to get really involved during specific activities

and free play, such as in the home corner, dressing up or construction play. Staff also help children to persevere during more challenging activities, for example when using scissors.

Children's understanding is fostered well as adults explain things clearly, for example when discussing the selection of foods, utensils and bowls and the meanings of celebrations for Chinese New Year. Children are encouraged to talk about what they see, taste and feel, for instance when tasting different foods, or when exploring natural materials like sand. Children's confidence in counting and letter recognition are fostered as part of activities, such as number rhymes, and when finding their name card for self registration or their named water bottle. All children focus on a letter and number each week. Younger children, as well as their older peers, talk about items beginning with the letter of the week. They listen to and discuss aspects of well-told stories and enthusiastically join in songs and rhymes.

Planning and assessments support younger children's progress. Medium term plans clearly show which aspects of 'Birth to three matters' will be promoted by the topic or theme. Staff ensure that activities and their expectations are adapted to cater for younger and less able children. However, all children respond very positively to the staff's high expectations, especially with regard to their social skills. They become increasingly self-reliant in managing personal care routines, such as getting ready for outside play, or in helping to set up for story time or tidying away. All children have positive relationships with their peers and adults.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are warmly welcomed and introduced to new children, whom they are encouraged to help feel at home. Staff are sensitive to those children who are less confident, quietly involving them in activities and reassuring them. Children are eager to know what they are going to do at each session. Staff clearly explain any specific activities, as well as describing free play activities. Children are encouraged to be self-reliant in their play, and in managing the contents of their lunch box, hanging up their clothes or looking after books and toys. Children get on well, playing together or looking at books together. They understand about the importance of sharing and often amicably resolve issues themselves.

Children are making good progress in recognising letter sounds and shapes. They focus on a letter sound each week and bring in items from home to illustrate this. Children also do further letter sound activities at home, which are discussed during the session. Children are developing confidence in recognising their name, for example at self-registration. Good use is made of print around the room to support their awareness, and there is an inviting mark making table. Children enjoy stories and independently select and look at books, which they handle and look after well.

Children are encouraged to look and listen carefully, for example at registration time. They speak clearly and confidently, including in a large group, for example when they share some news or explain what they have brought in for the letter of the week. Various prompts or puppets are used to help children to speak in turn. They use descriptive language as they recall events and promptly answer staff's good open-ended questions.

Children count confidently. They consistently recognise numbers up to five, and in some cases bigger numbers up to and beyond ten. Adults make good use of routines to promote counting, for example when children line up ready to go inside or outside. During a fun card game featuring dogs with spots, children compare the numbers on a dial with the numbers of spots on each dog. Staff encourage children to work out simple number problems, such as who has got more or less 'dog bones' awarded to them at the end of the card game. Children have fun estimating which of three key worker groups has drawn the most circle shapes on large pieces of paper.

Children's appreciation of other cultures and beliefs is fostered during discussions and activities. For Chinese New Year children make lanterns, look at and draw pictures of celebrations and taste different foods. They handle tools, such as scissors, with increasing control and use glue and sticky tape to fix different materials or items together, for example when making lanterns.

Children like being outside. They are energetic, climbing and balancing well on apparatus and confidently steering and scooting on wheeled toys. They are observant and curious about their surroundings and living things. They enjoy searching for bugs, gardening, making structures, and visiting an adjacent museum of buildings. Children are becoming confident in managing the computer mouse and exploring different programmes which effectively support their learning. They are creative and imaginative, developing their own ideas during cooperative role play and dressing up. Children represent their ideas through detailed paintings, drawings, collages and models.

Children's learning and progress are generally effectively supported by planning and assessment procedures. Long and medium term plans offer children a varied programme of rewarding topics, with clear learning outcomes relating to the Foundation Stage six areas of learning. Short term plans cover free play and some focus activities linked to the topic or which promote certain key skills, such as children's colour, shape, number and letter recognition.

The setting has devised an appropriate system for assessing children's progress using anecdotal evidence and the local authority's early years profile. However, short term planning does not consistently show how individual children's learning will be promoted. Weekly plans lack detail regarding intended learning objectives and how activities are to be adapted in order to accommodate children's differing abilities. In other respects, when working with the children, adults confidently adapt their approaches in order to support those who are more or less able. When children need help in developing certain skills, such as their use of scissors, suitable activities are also planned and organised.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children thrive in the setting's positive atmosphere. From the outset their self-esteem and confidence is promoted by caring, reassuring adults. Their individual health, care and developmental needs are clearly understood through close liaison with parents. Where there are concerns about a child's development, the setting works closely with carers and other agencies to ensure appropriate support is provided and so that children make good progress.

Children's understanding of diversity is fostered well. They play with toys which reflect positive images, and take part in activities which introduce them to aspects of other people's beliefs and festivals, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Opportunities to try Chinese foods and to listen to the adults' clear explanations, helps children experience a real sense of celebration during a most enjoyable snack time. The food is served in bowls with spoons, and children are fascinated by chop sticks which staff expertly use. Older children discuss pictures depicting Chinese New Year celebrations and draw their own pictures.

Children generally behave well. They know what is expected of them as staff make sure they understand what is going to happen next and how they hope children will behave. In line with the setting's behaviour management policy, which is included in the prospectus, children are encouraged to be kind and helpful. They often spontaneously offer to help, for example tidying up books and cushions in the book area. They play together well. Staff praise their efforts and also help children to see how they can improve further. Good manners and politeness are encouraged. Children talk about the importance of sharing, readily alerting their peers if they feel there are any shortcomings. Should children misbehave, staff calmly intervene, giving clear explanations as to why any behaviour is inappropriate and making suggestions for improvement. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents and carers are warmly welcomed. They feel comfortable about staying in the setting to settle their children and often end up joining in activities. They are well informed about the nursery via a helpful prospectus, access to policies and procedures and to a wealth of information displayed in the premises' entrance hall. This includes explanations of the 'Birth to three matters' framework including photographic evidence. Regular friendly newsletters ensure they know about themes and the letters, numbers and colours children are learning about. Parents help their children to bring in items from home and sometimes they come to a session to tell the children about their work or a particular skill. Parents also assist with fundraising, events and outings.

From discussions with parents, and evidence of the nursery's management of any concerns, it is clear that carers are aware of the nursery's complaints procedures. The group's policy meets the requirements of the National Standards and ensures any concerns are dealt with promptly and that appropriate records are kept.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They are well informed about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning via activities at home and helping their children to find items to bring into nursery to illustrate the letter or colour of the week. Parents contribute to their children's progress records and receive regular informal feedback about their child's activities and achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children and their families enter a most inviting setting. Adults ensure that children and their carers receive a warm welcome. The premises are bright and cheerful with plenty of colourful displays and well presented activities and toys. This means children can see what is available and this helps them to make choices about what they want to do.

Children are looked after by adults whose suitability is confirmed by appropriate recruitment, vetting and induction procedures. Qualification requirements are met, and adults keep up to date through attendance at training courses and sharing information at staff meetings. The nursery partners and other adults working with the children are kind and caring. They ensure children are valued as individuals and encouraged to take an active part in nursery sessions. Adults have clear roles and responsibilities which they understand and follow well so that children experience rewarding and smoothly run sessions. However, the nursery has accepted children under the age of two years nine months, looked after one child on the premises without a break between morning and afternoon sessions, and on one occasion looked after one more child than the setting is registered for. This means the nursery has not complied with the conditions of registration, potentially compromising children's safety and well-being. In the event there are no adverse effects on any of the children. They are all consistently well cared for, settled and busily involved in activities. Steps were immediately taken to address the situation during the inspection.

In general records and documents are well organised and support children's care. Revisions to initial registration forms means that the setting has additional relevant information regarding children's health and welfare. Policies and procedures are available for staff's guidance and parents' reference. However, there are some inconsistencies in recording children's and adults' attendance. This compromises their safety as names of additional children or of adults covering colleagues' absences are not always recorded.

The leadership and management of funded children is good. The nursery partners and other adults are confident to promote children's interest and learning, so they make good progress towards the early learning goals. Children respond positively to rewarding themes and activities which are well organised and resourced. Children are effectively grouped so they have good adult support. Aspects of themes and key activities are consistently evaluated in order to assess the benefits to children's learning.

Partners ensure that the quality of nursery education is maintained and developed. The introduction of Forest School type activities one day a week has captured the children's interest and developed their observation and investigation skills. New toys purchased as a result of fundraising have enriched their play and learning. The partners ongoing attendance on courses and good practice sessions has enhanced children's learning and improved assessment of their progress and support for children with learning difficulties. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- meet conditions of registration regarding the numbers and ages of children
- maintain accurate records of children's and staff's attendance.

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):

- show how individual children's learning needs, identified from assessments, are incorporated into short term planning
- further improve short term planning by using focus activity plans as a guide to the management of activities, as well as an evaluation tool.

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