



Ashdene Independent Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	304957
Inspection date	22 March 2006
Inspector	Sue Anslow
Setting Address	Ashdene Pre-School, Thoresway Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 6LJ
Telephone number	01625 521794
E-mail	
Registered person	Ashdene Independent Pre-School
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 good. 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?

Ashdene Independent Pre-School opened in 1987. It operates from a mobile building in the grounds of Ashdene Primary School. There are two play rooms and an entrance foyer with toilets, storeroom and office situated centrally. The pre-school is situated in a suburban area of Wilmslow, on the outskirts of the town centre. A maximum of 48 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09.00 until 11.45 and 13.00 until 15.10, term-time only. All

children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play-area.

There are currently 83 children aged from 2 to under 5-years-old on-roll. Of these, 61 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school currently supports children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 13 staff. 10 staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from Cheshire's Sure Start / Early Years Team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for within a healthy environment. Staff use effective routines and procedures to make sure that all areas are clean and appropriate for use, and ensuring that children are kept healthy at all times. Children understand the need to keep themselves healthy. They are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating in order to 'get rid of the germs'. Children are accompanied to the bathroom by staff who are always on hand to remind about toilet flushing and hand washing. Sick or injured children are cared for appropriately as all staff hold first aid certificates. A detailed sickness policy reassures parents that children are cared for within an environment that is as free from infection as possible.

Children learn the importance of healthy eating through the provision of healthy snacks and participating in activities, such as making their own sandwiches for snacks. These activities promote children's personal independence, their hand-eye coordination and their physical dexterity. They enjoy healthy snacks and drinks mid-morning and afternoon, with fresh fruit and vegetables featuring most often on the varied menu. Drinks of water or milk are provided with every snack and a water dispenser is available in one of the playrooms for children to help themselves during the day. Children in the second playroom, however, do not have free access to drinking water which compromises their health.

Children's physical development is well provided for. They have daily access to a good range of physical play activities, both indoors and outside, and are developing a range of good physical skills. A well stocked shed with a variety of sports equipment and wheeled toys provides children with appropriate challenges to promote their physical skills and coordination. Children practice throwing and catching balls and beanbags, hopping and skipping with hoops and ropes, and climbing and balancing on the large wooden climbing frame. Children develop their small physical skills through good access to appropriate activities and resources. They competently use scissors, crayons and computer keyboards, and they skilfully join together pieces as they use construction equipment, jigsaws and small world toys.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well planned and organised environment, which contributes to their learning, enjoyment and general safety. Staff make good use of the available space to offer children access to a wide range of activities and opportunities, both inside and outdoors. Children arrive happy, excited and eager to participate, readily becoming involved in the variety of activities offered. The room is well set out and activities prepared prior to the children's arrival. Artwork and photographs of children playing help everyone to feel welcome and give a sense of belonging.

The children have access to a wide range of toys and equipment, which supports an interesting programme of themes and activities. Equipment is kept clean and checked regularly for safety, ensuring that children's health is promoted. Children enjoy washing the dolls in warm, soapy water, which is a fun way of teaching children about cleanliness. A wide range of natural play materials compliments children's learning as they experiment with sand, water, different textiles and 'real' vegetables in the farm shop.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe through discussion with staff and gentle reminders about the importance of not running indoors and the safe use of tools, toys and equipment. They enjoyed a visit to a construction site recently, when the school next door was having an extension built. Children wore hardhats and helped the builders to mix the cement. Children benefit from a safe, secure environment because of the good policies and procedures in place. Large windows each side of the building allow staff to see anyone approaching, and staff are diligent with regard to the safety and security of the children. Risk assessments are carried out regularly, equipment is stored safely, fire drills are practiced every half term and gates are secured before children go outside to play. The children's welfare is carefully considered by staff who have a clear understanding and awareness of the procedures to be followed regarding child protection. Staff are clear about their role and the responsibilities of the designated staff member are fully understood. Detailed written child protection policies and procedures, which are shared with staff, parents and carers, ensure that the children's welfare is protected and safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children have access to and benefit from the wide range of activities and opportunities, which promote their effective learning and development. Good staff ratios ensure that children are supported well during play. Children benefit from a wide range of resources and active play experiences, and staff use the Birth to three matters framework when planning and evaluating activities for the younger children.

Children arrive settled and eager to participate in the range of opportunities offered to them. They learn to listen to staff and each other during group sessions on the mat, both when they arrive and later on during the day. Children benefit from attentive

interactions with staff who are actively engaged with the children in their activities, resulting in the children becoming competent learners. Children access a wide range of activities each day, as staff rotate toys and equipment regularly to sustain children's interest and enjoyment. Opportunities are available for children to be involved in large and small group activities, and on a one-to-one basis as required.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Qualified and experienced staff use the curriculum guidance for the foundation stage effectively to provide the children with good quality care and education. Children's learning is well supported by an enthusiastic and experienced staff team. Children are well stimulated and have appropriate challenges as they engage in a range of interesting activities and play opportunities. Children access a wide range of good quality resources which support their progress and development across all six areas of learning. The children are developing good relationships with one another and with the adults who care for them. They are becoming independent and make choices about their activities during free play. However, opportunities for children to take responsibility in their self-care, are minimal which compromises their personal independence.

Through effective staff interaction children are developing good language skills and are becoming skilful and confident communicators. Staff preparing to read a story talked to the children about the book's author and illustrator, explaining the meaning of these words and thus introducing new vocabulary to the children. All adults working with the children give clear and suitable responses to children's questions during play, and comment on the sounds of letters and rhyming words, such as 'Jim' and 'slim' and 'Kate' and 'cake'. Children make marks readily and some write their name competently. Children are currently making good use of the imaginative area as a farm shop with writing pads and pencils to take orders, write labels and price tags. These activities enable children to extend their play and at the same time develop their emergent writing skills.

Children are developing an understanding of number and simple calculations. They are able to count the number of people present and add / or subtract the numbers on the stars found hidden in the sand. Good quality resources are used well to help children to develop their understanding of mathematics. Children competently match shapes when completing pictures and puzzles. They compare attributes, such as large and small, heavy and light, as they weigh the vegetables in the farm shop and sort carrots and potatoes into different bags. Children are developing a good understanding of their own environment and that of the wider world. They enjoy simple science experiments, such as watching cut flowers change colour if they are placed in coloured water and comparing the results of watering or not watering their cress seeds. They talk about how long they are going to play in the garden for and the fact that five minutes is longer than two minutes, thus enhancing their mathematical skills. The computer is used to good effect as the children access photographs of their day at the building site and the subsequent building of 'The Three Little Pigs' houses.

The children's creative and imaginative development is promoted through a wide variety of art and craft activities. Sand and water play is available at every session

with different equipment added to extend children's curiosity and learning. The children's imagination is also developing well through a good range of resources to enhance pretend play. At present, a farm shop has been set up where children serve each other with fresh fruit and vegetables, weighing the produce and calculating the price on the tills. Children access a varied range of creative resources and materials enabling them to produce interesting and individual pieces of craftwork. Two of the children's fathers recently spent time with the children showing them how to use woodworking tools to create pictures out of various off-cuts. Children have regular opportunities to listen to sounds, sing and make their own music.

Activities are well planned and involve the children in a range of interesting and stimulating activities across all areas of learning. Planning is well established and activities are discussed and evaluated in order to highlight children's achievements and progress. Staff record observations of children's achievements and use these effectively to complete their developmental records. Systems are in place to enable staff to quickly identify any gaps in children's progress and this information is used to plan the next steps in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are included in all games and activities and their individual needs are respected and provided for. They are developing a good understanding of the wider world through various themes, for example, people in the community who help us, such as firemen and the police, and through the celebration of festivals. Children are encouraged to share and take turns with toys and equipment, helping to increase their understanding of the needs of others. Appropriate resources are used well to widen children's understanding of diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work effectively with parents, carers and outside agencies. This ensures that children with special needs are given support to enable them to participate fully in activities. Staff work closely with children in small groups and sometimes on a one-to-one basis as required. They supervise children with special needs through discreet observation, enabling children to integrate and be included as part of the group. Good verbal and written feedback on children's progress is given regularly to parents.

Children arrive happy, excited and confident, showing an eagerness to involve themselves in the activities offered. Self-confidence and self-esteem is promoted well by staff who praise and encourage children's efforts, achievements and helpfulness. They show good levels of concentration when persevering at activities, such as writing, counting and cutting. Children's behaviour is good overall as a direct result of effective staff interaction and close involvement with children in their activities. Staff are good role models, showing respect and consideration for children, one another and parents. A positive behaviour management strategy and policy encourages children's good behaviour.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Children benefit from the effective relationships being established from the outset. A committee of parents organise fund raising events throughout the year to ensure that children are provided with sufficient equipment and play materials to enhance their learning and development. Parents receive appropriate written and verbal information about the setting and what it has to offer in terms of care and education. They receive regular newsletters and can chat to their child's key-worker before and after every session. Parents have access to information on themes and activities and are encouraged to participate in the group in a number of ways, for example, coming in to read stories, help with projects or providing food for snacks. Parents and carers are very positive and supportive of the provision and what it offers their children. The effective partnership approach assists children's learning, development and general well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The environment is well organised and available space is utilised well to maximise play opportunities for children. Activities and equipment are rotated well throughout the sessions to engage children's interest and enhance their enjoyment. The children's care, health and safety is managed well by appropriate records and documentation. However, an extra signature of acknowledgment is required from parents for any medication administered. Policies and procedures are shared with parents prior to starting, written permissions are obtained as appropriate and parents are kept well-informed of their children's progress and development.

Leadership and management is good. Children's learning and development benefit from the strong leadership and effective management of the pre-school. All staff work effectively to ensure that children are provided with an environment that is interesting, stimulating and fun. Links exist with the school, especially with the continuation of the Foundation Stage Curriculum during children's transition to the reception class.

The team of qualified and experienced staff are aware of how children learn and develop. They have opportunities to access training to enhance their existing skills and knowledge. Staff are clear about their individual roles and responsibilities and within the staff team as a whole. Discussions take place before and after every session to plan and evaluate the themes and activities.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to retain a record of all risk assessments, review the storage of equipment in the boy's toilet, keep a record of any visitors to the pre-school, provide a policy for uncollected children and provide written procedures with regard to any allegations against staff. These items have all been addressed which ensures the safety and protection of children in the setting. The provider also agreed to ensure that drinking water was readily available to the children. A water dispenser has been purchased for one of the playrooms only. A further

recommendation has been made.

Following the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to ensure that children have full access to a range of art and craft materials and access to the outdoor play area throughout the day. Both these areas have been addressed which serves to enhance children's learning and development.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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 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):

- ensure children in Room 2 have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day

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):

- provide opportunities for children to take responsibility and increase their independence.

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