



## **The Avenue Early Years Centre & Activity Club**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY294025
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 July 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Jan Healy
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Governing Body of The Avenue School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

The Avenue Early Years Centre registered in 2004. It operates from an open plan centre in The Avenue School, in the town of Warminster, West Wiltshire. A maximum of 122 children may attend at any one time. The centre is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 150 children on roll, of whom approximately a third are funded for

nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The centre employs 13 staff, most of whom work full-time, and seven hold an appropriate early years qualification with one member of staff working towards an appropriate qualification in early years.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit as the staff promote the good health of children, for example, they wear an apron and gloves during nappy changing. The nappy changing unit is thoroughly cleaned after each use, and they are appropriately discarded in a designated rubbish bin, to prevent the spread of infection. Spare clothes are available so children can be changed in the event of an accident, and to help keep children clean. Individual wipes are available for cleaning babies and children's mouths after snack, and although paper tissues are readily available for nose wiping, children are not readily encouraged to make use of them. A thermometer can be found in the open plan room, which is monitored, to ensure children play in comfort. Children are able to play in the outdoor play area in all weathers, as there is an awning, to protect children from inclement weather and from the sun. Adults take off their outdoor shoes when in the baby room, to ensure babies crawl on a clean surface. Parents are requested to provide children with protective sun cream and a hat, to protect them from the sun.

Children have access to a large outdoor play area, where they are able to strengthen their muscles as they climb the steps of the climbing frame. They throw balls and are learning to catch them with reasonable accuracy. They have the facilities to engage in block play, where they learn the relationship between space and shape.

Children have the option of bringing their own lunch or having a freshly cooked meal prepared by the cook. However, packed lunches are not readily placed in the refrigerator, which helps to keep the food fresh. A healthy eating policy is in place, to ensure children are provided nutritious food, which complies with the healthy eating principles, developed by the staff, to help children grow and develop. Children have a beaker of water available, to prevent them from becoming thirsty, but they are not within their reach.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Upon arrival, children, parents and visitors are given a warm welcome, with the displaying of positive body language and facial expressions, helping children to feel happy and secure. The centre is child friendly, with the displaying of children's work and posters, which are mounted at children's eye level, helping to enhance children's

self-esteem. The temperature remains comfortable, as windows and doors are open during warm weather and heating is adjusted during the winter months. Accessibility is good for children who have a disability, so they are included in both indoor and outdoor activities. The environment is clean and well-maintained with children having access to natural light. Rest areas are adequate, as babies have the facility of sleeping in a cot, however, the room is open plan, and although staff keep noise to a minimum, babies are sometimes distracted.

Children have a wide range of toys and equipment available to encourage their independence, for example, toddlers have the use of a step ladder to reach the changing mat, which they are encouraged to climb. Child sized toilets and booster steps, aid children's independence when using the bathroom. Furniture, such as tables and chairs are child sized, so they are able to sit in comfort during play. Straps are fitted to chairs, which also have high sides, to prevent younger children from falling. Children are able to reach the toys easily, as they are stored at their level.

The staff ensure children remain safe due to their vigilance in their security measures, so unwanted visitors are unable to access the premises. An intercom system is in place and a visitor's record is maintained, so staff are aware of all adults who are on the premises. A suitable emergency evacuation procedure teaches children to leave the premises swiftly and safely. A fire extinguisher and blanket can be found in the kitchen, which staff are trained to use in the event of an emergency. The outdoor play area is fully enclosed, so children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised. Staff follow a written procedure for outings, to ensure children's safety.

Staff have read and understand the child protection statement. They have adequate knowledge with regard to child protection, and are aware of the procedure to follow in the event of a concern. Staff working with the younger children, know them well, and are in a position to notice a change in their appearance, behaviour or their general wellbeing. Existing injuries are recorded and parents are requested an explanation.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and staff share a warm relationship, with children being able to go to the staff for reassurance and affection. They aid babies and younger children to communicate through gestures and body language. Staff listen to what the children have to say and help them find their own voice, by allowing them to suggest ideas during play, for example, when feeling the texture of cooked pasta, they spoke about its texture, smelt it and rubbed it on their skin, clearly enjoying the experience. Children have opportunities to be imaginative, such as using the indoor climbing frame for picnics and snack.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff, although most hold a relevant qualification, do not all have good knowledge about the Foundation Stage curriculum. They do, however, continue to add to their knowledge by attending various training courses, for example, in equal opportunities. They are friendly and

approachable, helping children to feel comfortable and happy. They are positive and enjoy children's company. Reassurance and praise is given readily, aiding children to learn right from wrong. Staff encourage children to go on outings to explore their local environment, and to try new activities, including baking. Children are grouped in small numbers, having their own key worker, and through the guidance of the supervisors, they present the planning of activities appropriately. The centre is open plan, so children have plenty of space to move around and play alone or cooperatively. Both planned and free play activities offer children a reasonable range of play opportunities. Written records are clear, highlighting children's progress and achievements, so significant steps can be shared with parents. Resources are arranged at children's eye level, making it easy for them to access them independently. All toys and equipment provided are carefully chosen to maximise learning and progress.

Children are making sound progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They are becoming confident and are able to concentrate for short periods of time. They are beginning to use language to explain their feelings, such as happiness and sadness, and use the means of expression as communication, for example, smiling, frowning or crying. They take part in small group activities, such as modelling with clay and making collages. They are developing the ability to play cooperatively when building with wooden blocks. They are aware of the need to visit the bathroom at appropriate intervals and are able to communicate this need to a member of staff.

Children are making adequate progress in their communication, language and literacy. Their speech is developing, as they are using words and phrases with increasing clarity. Children respond willingly to questions, particularly if it is directly about them. They listen to instructions from staff when playing picture lotto, and interact when playing together. Children listen to stories, joining in with repetitive refrains, and make up stories during role-play. Most children are able to recognise their name on their coat peg and make marks with a wide variety of medium, including pens, pencils and chalk.

Children are developing their progress in mathematics. Children sing number rhymes and listen to number stories. They count the number of steps to reach the climbing frames, and older children are able to recognise some written figures. They are learning mathematical language, such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than'. Children recognise simple shapes and can follow directions, for example, when staff request the children to 'put the jigsaw on the table', and 'crawl through the tunnel'.

Steady progress is being made in physical development. Children move with confidence and are able to run, skip, hop and jump in the outdoor play area. They are able to master a sequence of movements, such as, climbing the steps of a slide, turning to sit, and sliding down. When moving to music, they show an awareness of their own and others' space, avoiding bumping into each other. Children are beginning to recognise the changes that happen to their bodies after exercise, as they will inform staff that they are tired after playing in the garden.

Children are making acceptable progress in their creative development. Children recognise and name primary colours, as well as black and white. They select

different coloured pens and crayons for their drawings and paintings. Children notice the behaviour of variously shaped objects, for example, expecting paper to fold and tear. They experiment with musical instruments, and are beginning to make patterns with sound.

Children are making positive progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children use their senses to explore their world, such as sight, when exploring the mini-beasts in the outdoor play area, and their sense of smell when participating in baking activities. They identify simple features of living things, for example, the petals on flowers, and are interested in wild creatures and farm animals. They are finding out about the use of everyday technology through having the opportunity to play games on a computer, and are taken on outings to a fire station, to learn about their local environment.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff promote anti-discriminatory practice, by making children feel good about themselves, by enabling children to share their experiences about events that occur at home, such as a new baby in the family or the celebrating of a birthday. All children are included in all the activities available and self-esteem is encouraged through appropriate praise. Children celebrate the Chinese New Year, however, they have little access to resources, which promote diversity, to help children appreciate and value each others' similarities and differences.

Staff are aware that some children have a special need and have adequate knowledge about the identification and assessment of a learning disability, however, they lack confidence to fully support children, and to speak to parents. The premises are suitable in providing access for a child with a disability and activities are adapted if necessary to ensure children are able to join in with all the activities available.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's behaviour is acceptable, as they learn to have respect for others as the staff are good role-models, and children imitate their behaviour. Desirable behaviour is reinforced through praise and positive body language. Children who display unwanted behaviour are provided an explanation as to why this is unwanted, and they are encouraged to understand the effects their behaviour has on others.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are made to feel welcome upon entering the centre, and are allowed the time and the space to settle their child. On-going discussions take place between the staff and parents, focusing on children's requirements, for example, children's medical conditions, daily routines and their favourite toys, including their likes and dislikes, aiding children to feel a sense of belonging. Photographs of the staff adorn the entrance hall, providing parents information about their roles and responsibilities. Parents have access to an array of written material, informing them about the policies and statements of the centre, enabling them to remain informed about the staffs' aims and responsibilities. Most information is shared with parents, to keep them up-to-date about their child's progress or about any concerns. Questionnaires and a comments book are used for

parents to write comments and suggestions, helping to build a partnership between the staff and parents, as staff are aware of the value parents offer.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The person in charge holds a suitable qualification in early childhood education and has a vast experience of working in management. She is able to carry out her role competently and has the skills and ability to lead. She ensures that sufficient staff work directly with the children, so that adult to child ratios are maintained, helping children to feel safe and secure. Consistency arrangements are made in the event of staff absence, so sufficient adults remain on the premises. All policies and procedures are written specifically for the group and are shared with parents. The deputy and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities, carrying out their roles professionally. Appraisals take place, which identify staff strengths, which are used to the group's advantage. Upon weaknesses being identified, training is sought, for example, learning disabilities, to enhance staffs' knowledge and confidence. Planning of activities and the recording of progress is sound. Records are based on observation, which identifies what a child knows and understands and activities match what a child is able to realistically achieve. However, although the planning is in place, some staff are unaware about why children are participating in such an activity, or what the learning objective is. Therefore, staff are unable to pinpoint whether a child is achieving or not, without seeking the advice and experience of the supervisors.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The person in charge is well qualified, and has sound knowledge about the National Standards and child development, aiding children to progress in their learning. Suitable recruitment arrangements are in place, to ensure the appropriate staff are employed to have unsupervised contact with children.

Most of the staff hold a relevant qualification in early years, and there are sufficient staff working directly with the children, so that minimum ratios are maintained. Additional staff carry out cleaning and maintenance, from which children benefit, as staff attention remains with them. The registration system contains enough detail to allow the staff to contact parents in the event of an emergency.

All documentation remains on the premises, making it easily available for inspection, and are stored confidentially. Records of progress are shared with parents and are retained for a reasonable period of time. Ofsted are notified about significant changes, so relevant details are updated.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 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 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 have independent access to fresh drinking water
- ensure noise is kept to a minimum in sleep areas
- provide children with resources which reflect positive images of diversity
- improve knowledge and understanding about the procedure to follow in the event of a child having a learning disability

### **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):

- improve knowledge and understanding about the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)