

Arnold St Mary's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253228
Inspection date	03 October 2007
Inspector	Susan Riley
Setting Address	Family Centre, St Mary's Church, Arnold, Notts, NG5 8HJ
Telephone number	07969 544 137
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Registered person	Arnold St Mary's 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 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?

Arnold St Mary's Pre-School is a committee run group, which opened in 1969. It operates from the Family Centre of St Mary's Church in Arnold, Nottingham. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 during school term times. On Tuesdays the pre-school runs a lunch club from 11:45 to 12:45. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these nine children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local community and for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school employs four members of staff. Of these, two hold an appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is working towards a qualification. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance, and receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is effectively promoted as the setting takes some positive steps to promote the children's good health, and encourages them to begin to take responsibility of meeting their own health needs. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures taken when children are ill so that health needs are met. Most children stay healthy because some of the staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines and their own policies and procedures to prevent cross-infection.

The children's welfare is mainly promoted because the provider can respond to accidents appropriately as current first aid certificates are held, the first aid box is up to date and easily available and accidents are recorded and shared with parents. However, accident records do not always contain sufficient information to fully protect children and do not always respect confidentiality. Children are starting to learn about their personal hygiene and how to keep healthy as some of the staff encourage them to follow appropriate practice. For example, they are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, but not always after eating their snack. Not all staff encourage children to follow appropriate practice. For example, during snack time some children take food off the plate and then are told to put it back. This does not fully protect children from cross-infection.

The children are appropriately nourished. They have adequate opportunities to learn about healthy eating because the setting provides children with regular drinks and food that are nutritious and complies with their dietary and religious needs. The children are learning about healthy living through a range of satisfactory activities that develop the children's understanding of what foods are good for them. The group has recently had a healthy living grant and are using this to encourage children to learn how to keep healthy. They are provided with organic snacks which are purchased from a local organic farm. Very healthy snacks are provided for the children and they participate in food tasting activities as they learn about what food is good for them.

The children enjoy the varied opportunities to experience physical activities and develop their skills. They go out to play in the fresh air daily and have many opportunities to practise their skills. Children are set a daily physical challenge for learning and they attend a weekly yoga session as part of the healthy living grant.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safe and are generally well cared for in premises that are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. This is because the setting ensures that the environment given children adequate access to a satisfactory range of facilities that mostly promote children's development. The children mostly use an adequate range of equipment that is suitable and safe. This is because the setting provides furniture, equipment and toys which are appropriate for their purpose. They are of suitable design and condition and are well maintained.

Children's safety is mainly promoted because the registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings. The provider ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents and minimise identified risks to children. However, the electrical

items have not been checked so the staff are not able to ensure these are safe for children to use. The premises are secure and the staff have effective systems for the safe arrival and collection of children. Effective risk assessments are used to ensure all areas are safe for children. There are suitable procedures to ensure children are safe on any outings. For example, parental consent is given, risk assessments are carried out before the children are taken out, emergency contact details and first aid resources are taken and appropriate ratios are maintained.

Children are starting to learn to keep themselves safe as the staff offer gentle reminders for the need to walk when inside and clearly explain why they should walk and not run, so the children are beginning to understand. The children have recently had a visit from the local road safety team to talk about good practice when out and about. Children are adequately protected from harm because staff have a satisfactory understanding of their role in child protection. They are able to put appropriate procedures into practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are confident, independent and are developing their self-esteem. They enter the playroom well and soon settle at the activities. Children confidently move around the areas within the room, they try the activities and approach the staff for their needs or support. The older children are very aware of the routines of the session, and quickly tidy up when the tidy up music comes on. Children are starting to ask questions and respond to new challenges by questioning and using their own initiative. All children have their individual needs met and are developing a satisfactory range of knowledge and skills. Children are beginning to distinguish right from wrong and form positive relationships. Staff encourage children to share and be nice to their friends. The children come together for large and small group times. Children sit together in small groups during snack time and conversations are encouraged. This helps children to build up positive relationships.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and have attended training. All staff contribute to the planning and they meet weekly. Long term planning is in place and covers all areas of learning. Very basic short term plans are used but these do not always demonstrate accurately what children are intended to learn. Staff recognise this is a weak area and are currently working with their local authority teacher/mentor to address this. The monitoring of children at focused activities does not occur and key children are being missed. This means that children are not accessing the full curriculum. Staff provide opportunities to encourage children to think, but they do not always appropriately challenge them to take their learning to the next level.

Staff currently do not make regular observations of the children. They rely on the limited focused activity sheets, which do not cover all children. A new system of assessment records is now being used. The staff team are not using the information gained from the assessment records to effectively plan activities and experience for children in order to move them on to their next stage in learning. This is currently being addressed with the help of the local authority teacher/mentor. Staff build easy and trusting relationships with the children and encourage them to try new experiences. They work directly with the children and provide an inviting environment that is organised to help children to be self-sufficient.

Children are happy to enter the playroom and they settle down well. They are very aware of the routine for the session. Children move around the activities at their own pace and are happy to interact with the staff. Children demonstrate curiosity as they go over to tables with different activities on and ask questions, which is evident of a positive approach to learning. They are independent and are able to meet their own needs as they arise. Children have good levels of concentration as they complete activities to their own satisfaction. They are well behaved and are able to take part in large group activities. The setting celebrates various festivals and celebrations throughout the year, which raises children's understanding and awareness.

This is a young group of children and they mainly communicate with the staff, who encourage the children to communicate with one another. For example, during group time the children sit in a large circle and roll a ball to another child who has to say their name and then their favourite food. Children listen to the staff and respond to simple instructions. They enjoy stories and excitedly join in with the repeated refrains. Children pick up books and use them for their own enjoyment as they sit and look at the pictures and text. They are learning how to hold a pencil correctly and make marks and give meaning to their marks. For example, children are encouraged to draw their favourite foods. Children are also regularly engaged in activities requiring their hand-eye coordination. They are not encouraged to start using or listening to the phonic sounds of letters. There are no opportunities for children to start to read a range of familiar or common words, for example, their own name, or other simple words around the setting.

Children can count and recognise numerals and they show an interest in numbers and counting. They demonstrate their understanding of the small numbers as they hold the correct number of fingers up during the story and of simple subtraction as they take one away. Children join in with excitement as they take part in the game 'What Time is it Mr Wolf' and count the number of strides they take. Children confidently sort by shape and number. However, there were lots of missed opportunities for children's learning in this area. Opportunities are provided for children to explore and investigate. Children demonstrate curiosity as they observe and manipulate objects around the room. They explore the variety of items whilst doing their sticky pictures. Children are able to build and construct with a range of resources. They are starting to show an interest in the computer which is readily available to the children. However, this is not effectively monitored by staff and children soon leave the activity as they are not able to complete the program.

Children move confidently and imaginatively and in safety around the setting. They move with control and co-ordination and are able to steer their bikes around objects. Balancing skills are developing as they go across the beams. Children use and develop their large and small muscles as they follow actions when singing rhymes and songs. Children show increasing control over clothing and fastenings as they put on and take off their own coats and aprons. They are learning about good practices with regard to exercise, eating, and hygiene that can contribute to their good health through the healthy living project. For example, the children have weekly yoga sessions. Children have their own creative corner, where they can develop their own creativity for themselves. They can use the selection of resources and try out various techniques at their own pace and to their own satisfaction. Children are starting to build three dimensional objects with the construction materials. They are starting to know the colours and demonstrate this by sorting by colour. Children enjoy singing and they have regular music and movements sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally confident and settled in the setting. They enter the room happily and settle to the early good morning routine. Children feel a sense of belonging to the pre-school as they are welcomed by name. Staff talk with the children and play with them, they sit at their level and give eye contact. All children are valued as individual which actively promote inclusion. Through the use of a range of resources, books and topic work, children are learning about their own and other cultures and about the different needs of others. Staff show regard to children's individual needs and take steps to ensure these are met. Children are starting to be aware of their own needs as they access the toilet as they require. They also wash and dry their hands after painting or messy play and put their aprons on and off.

Suitable systems are in place for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children make positive relationships and they behave well. They are learning to treat each other and their belongings with care and concern. The staff praise the children which raises their self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children benefit from the sound relationships that the staff have with the parents. They work closely with the parents and carers to meet children's individual needs and ensure they are fully included in pre-school. For example, relevant information is gathered from parents to enable the staff to appropriately care for the children.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. The welcome booklet for parents is currently being reviewed and updated. Information is shared about the Foundation Stage and parents are aware of what their children are learning in the sessions. They see the planning displayed and the learning intentions. Systems for sharing children's development are largely informal. However, parents are aware that they can request to see their children's development file at any time and talk with the staff. The provider has recently sought parents' views about the provision through parent questionnaires.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are protected because of the recruitment and vetting procedures are thorough and ensure that all staff and committee have been vetted and are safe and suitable to be in contact with them. They benefit because the manager and staff have the appropriate qualifications, knowledge and experience to do their jobs which ensures that children's needs are met. The staff have a high regard for the well-being of all children and are good role models for them. Correct staff ratios are maintained at all times which supports children's care, learning and play. Children are appropriately grouped and they benefit from well-deployed staff, who consistently interact with them and give them effective support and encouragement. This helps children to feel secure and confident. Staff know their roles and responsibilities and effectively implement routines to give children a broad range of experiences.

The management and organisation of the setting is pro-active in ensuring the practice of all staff contributes positively to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Most policies and procedures protect children sufficiently and are effectively implemented to promote all the outcomes for children. Records are available and retained for inspection, they are suitably organised and most are kept in a

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

Leadership and management of early education is satisfactory. The new manager is developing sound aims and values for the provision and has a clear vision for staff continuing improvements for children's care and education. The manager is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses for children's education and what is required for improvement. The whole staff team are working very closely with the local authority teacher/mentor to address the identified weaknesses. The pre-school have recently undertaken a detailed parent questionnaire to monitor the provision and their practice and the response has been favourable. The staff team work well together and are good role models for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, a number of recommendations were agreed. Systems have been implemented to ensure that staff are suitable both mentally and physically to care for children. This check is completed as part of the vetting procedures. This ensures children's safety and well-being. The safeguarding children statement and procedure has been reviewed to be in line with current guidance. The designated person for safeguarding children has attended recent training so is fully aware of their role and responsibility to protect children. The pre-school has a new manager and committee who have all worked very hard in turning the group around. Staff are working with the local authority teacher/mentor to improve their planning and assessment systems. However, this is in the early stages so has been carried forward from this inspection. The partnership with parents is starting to improve as the setting provides opportunities for them to share and contribute to their child's records at their request. A parents' meeting was held to set up a rota where they can help at the session and see their child at play and what they are learning. Parents are starting to be more involved in the group. For example, one parent recently undertook a French session with the children. The children do benefit as the parents and staff work well together. Children are now provided with daily opportunities to explore and investigate objects, materials or equipment, which raises their awareness of the world they live in and helps to develop their curiosity.

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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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):

- improve the good health of children and take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection
- ensure the electrical appliances conform to safety requirements and do not pose a hazard to children.

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):

- develop further the linking of letters and sounds and reading opportunities for children
- develop further the planning of activities, to ensure appropriate challenge for all children and monitor the activities to ensure all children access the full curriculum
- ensure regular observations are made of what children can and cannot do and use this information to inform the assessments of children and then use this information to effectively plan for the next steps in children's learning.

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