



# The Aviary Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY321129
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 September 2006
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<b>Registered person</b>	Hampshire County Council
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 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?

The Aviary Children's Centre opened in 2006. It operates from a re-furbished building, situated on the same site as Nightingale Primary School in Eastleigh, Hampshire. It is run by Hampshire County Council. Within the centre there is a full day care nursery which is registered to care for a maximum of 56 children aged under five years. The nursery is also registered to deliver nursery education for three and four-year-olds. Currently, there are 25 children on roll, 19 of whom receive funding for nursery education and 16 in total are learning impaired.

The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks a year. Children may stay for a variety of sessions, including over lunch time. Children come from the wider area as well as the local community. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The council employs 10 nursery staff, eight of whom, including the nursery manager, hold early

years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority and is designated in the future as Sure Start Children's Centre.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities that contributes positively to their health. The setting operates a good open door policy, enabling children to freely explore the indoor and outdoor environment. This develops their confidence to practise their physical skills in the fresh air. Children learn to peddle a tricycle or use a scooter developing co-ordination and enjoy using the large, soft play shapes to crawl, step up or climb depending on their individual stage of development. Good mobility aids are ready and available to assist children with physical impairments to freely move around the nursery and access the varied play opportunities on offer.

Staff sympathetically support children to make progress in their physical development and offer challenges to them within the play environment. Toddlers enjoy the well planned play space available to them, freely moving around either independently or using a baby walker.

Funded nursery education children have good opportunities to use a wide variety of tools and equipment. For example, a three-year-old carefully takes the pegs off the washing line in the home corner and skilfully cuts paper into strips using scissors. They learn to deal with their own physical needs as they confidently and independently access the toilet and wash their hands afterwards. Future planning indicates that funded children will have the opportunity to grow and eat their own vegetables which helps children understand about healthy eating.

Children's health is successfully promoted because of the staff's good practices which permeate through the nursery. For example, staff are very careful to ensure that each toddler has their own damp, disposable cloth to use before and during snack time and staff quickly put aside toys that need washing when they have been sucked or chewed. The premises and surfaces are very clean and staff operate diligent cleaning routines which ensures cross infection is kept to a minimum. Children themselves learn good personal hygiene practices; they are encouraged to wash their hands independently before accessing the snack bar. Staff receive expert, specialist, medical training to ensure that children with specific health needs are cared for by skilled and knowledgeable practitioners. Children's nutritional needs are met well with healthy snacks on offer to them such as grapes, cheese, banana, yogurt, and additive-free, sugar-free drinks or water. Staff are very aware of the diverse dietary needs of the children who attend because good systems are in place which ensures children's health is protected. Documentation which supports children's health such as the accident book is up-to-date and maintained efficiently by staff.

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

The provision is good.

Children play and are cared for in a safe, secure, child friendly environment where the welfare and safety of the child takes priority. A personal security policy is well implemented by staff to ensure children are collected by authorised adults only. Coded, high locked, doors and a signing in procedure means that children see people and visitors that are known to staff. Regular, written, risk assessments are carried out on all areas of the nursery to identify hazards which are then addressed by management. Daily checks are completed by room staff to ensure children's safety and children undertake regular fire drills, learning about the evacuation procedure which is well-recorded. Staff are vigilant and respond swiftly to potential hazards such as sand on the floor and the sound of running water. Children have access to a good amount of high quality resources and equipment that are well maintained and conform to safety standards; staff regularly check it to ensure it remains suitable and safe for children. Resources are extremely well organised to create a very accessible and stimulating environment for the children. Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect because staff are confident about the procedure; they know who to report to and know to monitor and record any concerns they may have. A comprehensive child protection procedure is in place, and followed which contributes to safeguarding children from harm.

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

The provision is good.

Children and babies are very settled and happy in the stimulating, inviting environment. Babies eagerly explore their room, playing with the quality resources that are within their reach. For example, a one-year-old, non-mobile baby sits happily with a basket of shapes enjoying the feel of them and empties and fills up the basket. Another, mobile, one-year-old excitedly moves around the room selecting different toys and books to play with and look at. Staff in the younger room are skilled practitioners who interact with babies effectively picking up on their interest and successfully extend their play and learning. For example, a baby selects a book and together with the practitioner they look at the pictures while the adult reads the words. The baby copies the words and receives plenty of praise, which encourages her communication skills even more; the practitioner shows the baby some building bricks that are pictured in the book and encourages the baby to build with bricks which she does happily and successfully. Sensory activities such as water, sand and gloop are on hand for the babies to experiment and explore. Staff are very caring and sympathetic to young children and are secure in implementing the birth to three matters framework into their practice; this has a positive impact on children's enjoyment and achievements.

## **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In a very short time staff are getting to know children well; they are quickly able to assess their level of development or attainment. Children have good opportunities to progress up to and through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals because practitioners have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the Special Educational Needs code of practice. Their teaching practice and interaction with children is effective which facilitates children's learning; staff are skilled at covering many

areas in one activity such as when children enjoy big box play staff encourage communication skills, encourage role play with others and introduce mathematics by talking about prepositions such as behind, on top. An exciting, practical play environment is offered and is continually accessible to the children which covers all six areas of the curriculum. Clear, broad Foundation Stage plans have recently been implemented by staff and include the stepping stones as learning intentions to ensure children's progress. Assessment records and staff observations are made of the children's capabilities and will be used to inform the planning. Funded children who are not yet on the stepping stones of the Foundation Stage because of their impairments all have specific learning targets and are very well catered for. However, the current written Foundation Stage plans do not specifically identify the learning targets of children who are at different levels within the curriculum. Staff are able to loosely differentiate their teaching in practice, but the planning does not assist them in this aspect of their work and therefore does not wholly benefit the diverse group of children who attend.

Children have the opportunity to spend good lengths of time at an activity of their choosing which helps develop perseverance and concentration. Children learn to communicate through systems such as a Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and signing, because many of the staff use Makaton alongside their speech. Other children engage easily in conversations with the adults, particularly at the snack bar when they are in a small group with an adult. Staff relate well to children and encourage them to think such as when a child recalls what he ate for breakfast in the morning.

Children are developing their emergent writing skills well; they have many opportunities to practice their eye hand co-ordination and make marks either at the well resourced writing table or on the painting easel. Staff pick up on opportunities to encourage children to 'write their name' on their picture at the art table. Children have opportunities to learn to count and recognise numerals, assisted by the good resources on offer each session, such as a sensory, counting domino game. During whole group time children become familiar with problem solving as they sing and sign the five little ducks song with the adult using plastic ducks for visual aids. Children are confident working on the computer where they use their fingers to progress the programme along; they also are able to use a flash on a camera in the play room with enjoyment. Children experiment with water and explore the properties of sand; good resources are available for them to design and build. Staff talk with children about the past and future events in their lives which helps children understand the concept of time. Children experience a range of creative opportunities; through role play situations and by exploring a good variety of media and materials, such as play-dough, and a range of painting techniques such as marbling.

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

The provision is good.

Children are valued and treated as unique individuals because staff have a very good understanding of equal opportunities. Excellent strategies are in place to include all children in all activities and staff work very well with other professionals to ensure that those children who have specific needs are met and are made to feel welcome. For example, a visual timetable helps children understand the routine and children with high needs often have a one to one worker. All children have the opportunity to develop a positive attitude to others through the

good images they see and play with in the nursery such as child height posters, books and role play figures.

Children are well behaved because they are well stimulated, happy and receive plenty of praise and encouragement from staff. They understand the boundaries within the nursery because staff are firm and consistent in their approach about behavioural expectations. Children are developing successfully in their personal independence; with and without support from adults they freely access the snack bar at a time of their choosing, pour their own drinks and access the toilet. Children are learning to play with others because staff act as mediators in their play such as when two children play at the water tray the adult encourages a three-year-old to pour water into his friend's cup. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents can access an informative website of the setting and receive an information book which covers most care aspects of the nursery and the education curriculum they offer. Parents are well informed about their children's progress especially those children who have a learning impairment; future planning includes parents evenings to discuss children's capabilities and set future targets for all children. Children benefit from the effective relationships between their parents and the open and friendly staff team at the nursery. Parents receive regular newsletters and notice boards inform them of topical information and include photographs of the children learning through play. There is good daily communication between staff and parents either on a face to face basis or through record books. Parents are consulted on at all levels within the centre from policy making to appointing new staff. Babies' and toddlers' continuity of care is successfully enhanced by the use of diary sheets which records the children's daily activities and care routines. Parents talk highly about the setting and of their child's progress. Policies and procedures are available for parents to view, and management have a clear and up-to-date complaints procedure which includes a complaints log. However, this procedure is not outlined in the parent's handbook.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for and learn in an extremely well organised environment, with staff making good use of the resources and space to benefit the children. Draft policies and procedures, waiting management approval, are in place which underpin practice; they will be regularly reviewed to ensure that the setting is continually evaluating how it operates. All management and staff are suitably checked and vetted in line with the County Council policy; the manager puts a high priority on developing a supportive team who can competently care for children. High staff ratios mean that children receive plenty of attention and supervision. The majority of staff are suitably qualified and experienced practitioners. They have a clear sense of purpose and keep up-to-date with short courses and in house training.

Leadership and management is good. The setting is forward thinking in their planning and development. For example, management and staff visit high quality settings to improve their practice and comprehensive plans are in place to develop the outdoor area as a quality resource for the children. The setting monitors the educational programme offered to children including the teaching practice, by informal observations of staff and evaluation of routines and activities. Management and staff are committed to improving practice, undertake regular self appraisals

and will shortly be undertaking development plans. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **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.

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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):

- update the parent and carer's handbook to ensure it fully covers all aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum and outlines the complaints procedure

#### **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 and implement focus plans to ensure that they cover children of different abilities and aids their progression through the stepping stones in all aspects of the curriculum

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