



## Ashcombe Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY336518
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 November 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Elaine Douglas / Rachael Williams
<b>Setting Address</b>	Ashcombe Children's Centre, Stepping Stone Walk, Off Earlham Grove, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS23 3JW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01934 426807
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	North Somerset 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?

Ashcombe Children's Centre Nursery was registered in 2006. It is based on the site of Ashcombe County Primary School. The purpose built premises provide care and education for children from birth to five years. The reception classes, Springboard Opportunity Group - Weston, and the after-school club also share the building. Nursery accommodation consists of three separate playrooms, kitchen and dining areas, accessible toilet facilities, offices, consultation and training rooms plus space for crèche activities. There are separate, fully enclosed outside play areas with hard and lawned surfaces. All children have access to an internal 'outside' area, suitable for all weather play.

The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 60 children from birth to eight years. Currently there are 72 children on roll, of these, 42 receive funded nursery education. The centre is open from 08.00 to 18.00 each weekday throughout the year. Children attend for a

variety of full and part time sessions, some of which are term-time only. Crèche sessions are arranged as needed to support the additional service provided for families in the area. The centre also provides health, family support and information services.

More than half of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 2, 3 or above. The setting receives support from an advisory teacher through the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is protected by staff following thorough cleaning procedures; they clean equipment before preparing food and keep all the surfaces clean. They use colour coordinated clothes and weekly rotas for cleaning toys and equipment. Staff notice when the youngest children have runny noses, and provide tissues for the older and more able children. Staff carry out good procedures when changing nappies and dispose of them appropriately. They wear clean disposable gloves and aprons each time, and thoroughly clean the mat after use. However, the youngest children's health is compromised as children and adults wear their outdoor shoes in areas where babies crawl; sometimes they drop their cups or dummies and put their fingers or toys in their mouths. Rooms are kept to an appropriate temperature by staff making regular checks and adjusting the heating or ventilation. A good supply of first aid equipment is easily accessible and most staff have first aid training. Accidents and medication are appropriately recorded.

Children's health is promoted through access to fresh drinking water. Older children are able to help themselves and the younger children have their picture on their beaker to enable them to select the correct cup. Children are provided with a good range of nutritional snacks and meals which are prepared fresh on site. Menus are available so parents can see what their children are having. However, there is no system to check what foods weaning babies have previously had, to limit the possibility of allergic reactions.

Children develop some awareness of healthy practices through their daily routines. They wash their hands prior to eating and after using the toilet. However, they are at risk of cross contamination as they all share the same water in the large trough-type sinks and sometimes share the same towel.

Children under three years have daily opportunities to take part in physical activities to promote their large muscle skills. They use both the garden and communal covered area to run and use balancing equipment. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum to plan a range of interesting activities to support children in developing physical skills. The covered communal area ensures children benefit from fresh air and exercise throughout the year.

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

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe through very good supervision. They do not access potentially dangerous areas, such as the main kitchen and the laundry room. Babies sleep safely in a separate room and are monitored regularly. Children have good space to play and use equipment, such as tables and chairs which are appropriate to their age and stages of development. Each room has a good variety of appropriate toys and resources, many of which are stored on low level shelving to allow children to make choices and select resources independently. Children sit safely to eat and are provided with appropriate cutlery and crockery to support their development. Good security ensures access to the premises are closely monitored which keeps children safe and secure.

Children's welfare is very well safeguarded by staff recording any incidents and reporting them to parents and senior staff. Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and good documentation provides further guidance. Sensible policies and procedures, and good risk assessments are effectively implemented by staff to safeguard children. A policy on the use of equipment in the communal covered area helps to protect the youngest children. However, daily checks prior to use are not carried out, to ensure there are no choking hazards left behind by other users.

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

The provision is good.

Children under three years make good progress because staff effectively use the Birth to three matters framework, to provide an exciting range of activities and resources. These engage the children's interest and support their development. Resources are well organised to allow children independence. Staff pick up on children's interests and provide further resources. For example, staff notice one child carrying one of the dolls around with them, they then provide a toy cot, blankets and dolls clothes. The child's imagination and representative play is then extended. Children's vocabulary is promoted through good interaction. Staff ask open ended questions and give the toddlers time to reply. Children have very good opportunities to complete tasks for themselves to their own satisfaction. Their creativity is particularly encouraged. They select from a wide range of materials and textures. For example, children making clay sculptures, add feathers, shells, leaves and sticks. Children select books and begin to understand their purpose. For example, one toddler tells staff 'I am reading' as she names the animals in the book. Staff make good observations of the children's achievements and use the information well to plan each child's next stage of development.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Staff are experienced and committed to further developing their planning, observations and evaluations to enhance the learning experience for children. Most early years practitioners show exceptionally good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum reflected in their ability to spontaneously challenge children further in their self-chosen activities. Practitioners create a warm and

welcoming environment which is conducive to learning. For example, a good range of resources are readily available on the mark-making trolley for children to initiate activities of interest. For instance, noticing that it is windy outside a child decides to make a kite to fly. She is able to access all materials independently and is well supported by an early years practitioner who challenges her thinking to make improvements on the finished article and reflect on the process before she goes and experiments with it outside. On the whole, resources support children's development, however, there are limited toys and resources to promote understanding of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) or equipment to further develop large muscles skills.

Practitioners good understanding of learning intentions, through clearly defined planning, effectively monitors children's progress through pertinent evaluations and the establishment of Possible Lines Of Direction (PLODs) to build on children's interests. Most practitioners are exceptionally good at explaining the learning intention through effective communication with the children. For example, an early years practitioner clearly explains to the children that she wants them to name the colour of the Velcro segment that they hope their ball will hit. Children are engrossed in the activity and are very good at taking the initiative, as when the ball will not stick to the segment, they go and place it on, thus matching the same colour ball to the segment successfully. However, children are not consistently involved in mathematical activities. Many games are stored out of reach and not all practitioners are confident to engage children in early calculation and problem solving activities.

Children's communication, language and literacy is exceptionally good. They communicate well through the high-quality interactions of practitioners who consistently engage them in meaningful conversations. For example, one child relishes the opportunity to sort the self-registration board with a practitioner and notices there is a visitor in the room. He ensures that she has a name card to add to the board so that she is not left out, showing concern for others. Children are very good at recognising their names and this is extended well to encourage children to label their creations independently. Each child has their own mark-making book which they can access at any time during the session and do so confidently. Practitioners support these children well and praise their writing skills. Children are thoroughly engaged when listening to stories. Practitioners use an excellent range of teaching methods to sustain children's interest. For example, children are actively involved in observing pattern and rhyme in books, such as 'Rumble in the Jungle' and 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' and participate enthusiastically with repeated refrains, such as 'rowed down the river and they went along' where props and actions are used well to involve children in sharing stories.

Children have a wealth of opportunities to be creative and to develop these skills freely and imaginatively. For example, whilst using a range of resources with the clay some children decide to borrow some feathers and use the paint to express themselves freely. They are supported well by practitioners to mix colours and to develop new ways of using the feathers. The children spontaneously discuss the problem of getting paint on the floor and are supported by staff to solve this problem for next time.

Children are very settled and confident within the environment. They behave very well and those that need additional guidance are generally well supported. Some staff lack the confidence to reinforce children's knowledge of expectations and boundaries to ensure they can access

all learning experiences. Children are very curious and are keen to be involved in activities. There are good opportunities for children to explore and to investigate for instance, children mix water with cornflour to create 'gloop' and when too much water is added they decide to put it outside to see if it will make it go harder.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from staff seeking good information from parents to meet each child's individual needs. Home visits and a very good settling-in policy, plus staff spending time getting to know the children and finding out their daily routines, ensures that they are cared for as individuals. Children receive consistent care; babies sleep, eat and have their nappies changed when they require it. Consequently they are settled, happy and confident to approach staff, knowing their needs will be met. There are appropriate procedures in place to ensure children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are appropriately cared for in conjunction with their parents and outside agencies.

Children develop an awareness of people's differences through posters depicting positive images. They access a range of books and some cultural resources. Older children also celebrate many festivals. Children develop a clear understanding of expectations on their behaviour through most staff consistently using appropriate strategies. Younger children are distracted, and praised for being helpful and kind. Staff give good explanations, so children are encouraged to act that way again. For example, one child picks up the cutlery dropped by another. Staff praise her for her helpfulness and then explain why the cutlery needs to be changed. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good, which contributes significantly to children's well-being within the nursery. Children benefit from the close relationships practitioners have with their parents to ensure their individual needs are met and that practitioners can plan effectively for their development. There is a regular exchange of information and parents are fully involved in their child's learning and may contribute through the 'parent's voice' sheet in children's profile documents. Children's achievements are regularly shared through daily discussions and through parent evenings each term.

Children's welfare is protected by parents access to an abundant range of informative literature relating to the provision for their child, such as through the regularly updated notice board. This includes some information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and the Birth to three matters framework. Parents are also invited to attend the regular drop-in sessions and parent's meetings.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and welfare is effectively supported through the appropriate organisation of the premises and documentation. Children's records are well organised and used to provide appropriate care. Parents sign their children in with daily contact numbers. Good procedures

are followed to keep most of the children's information confidential. However, dietary information is displayed. The extensive operational plan is currently being reorganised into the outcomes for children to provide a more effective working document for staff.

Children are cared for by experienced qualified staff who regularly meet to evaluate their practice. However, not all documentation relating to qualifications is available for inspection, to ensure children's welfare is protected. A good management structure supports the nursery as part of the children's centre. Communal areas support the children in belonging to a larger organisation. The nursery manager meets regularly with the centre manager to ensure the provision is meeting the needs of children and their families. Good appraisal and induction procedures ensure staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities; they have good opportunities for further development.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The head of the Foundation Stage works closely with all staff and the manager, to provide a balanced curriculum. Staff review and evaluate the activities and are committed to ongoing improvements. The managers have identified the minor weaknesses in some teaching and are monitoring actions to improve. 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 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**

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):

- improve the procedures to protect the youngest children from cross contamination, with particular regard to hand washing equipment and keeping the floors clean where babies are crawling
- ensure you work closely with parents when introducing new foods to weaning babies
- implement a system to minimise risks to babies when using the communal covered area
- ensure evidence of staff qualifications are available for inspection and ensure information on children's dietary needs are kept confidential

### **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 appropriate equipment and opportunities to develop children's ICT and large muscle skills
- develop staff's confidence to ensure teaching and behaviour management strategies are consistently applied

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)