

# Alphabets Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109823
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Mann
<b>Setting Address</b>	Scout Headquarters, Recreation Ground, Botley, Southampton, Hampshire, SO30 2ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	0786 754 2988
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Alphabets Pre School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Alphabets Preschool opened in approximately 1973. It is registered to care for no more than 24 children under five. It operates from the Scout Hall in the recreation ground, Botley. The preschool serves the local area.

There are currently 29 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 22 children who receive funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:30 until 12:00 Monday to Friday morning and when the need arises, the group is also open Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12.30 until 15:00.

A total of seven part time staff work with the children. Of these, five hold an early years qualification. The setting receives support from advisory teachers from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and from the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a range of procedures and routines which promote their good health. They adhere to hygienic practices, such as washing their hands before eating to limit the spread of germs. Children learn about the benefits of eating nutritious foods through following a topic on healthy eating. This gives them opportunities to try a variety of foods and learn about where they originate. For example in one activity, children squeeze oranges to make fresh juice. This enables them to think about where fruit juice comes from and to taste it. This topic also generates a great deal of discussion about foods that they like, and about foods that are good for you. Children enjoy sociable snack times where they eat a range of healthy foods. They take pleasure from being in one another's company, talking and laughing as they eat and drink.

Children have daily opportunities for physical exercise which help them to develop their co-ordination and improve their level of general fitness. When the weather is fine, they use a large secure garden to enjoy a variety of activities. Children develop good catching skills through playing ball and they all show great delight when playing with the parachute, shaking it to make it billow and running underneath it. When the ground outside is too wet, children play a variety of physical games in the large hall, and enjoy group activities such as circle games and action rhymes and songs. In this way, children have regular exercise and the opportunity to have fun and burn off their surplus energy.

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

The provision is good.

Children are secure in a cheerful and welcoming environment that suits their needs. Their pictures are displayed around the room, which allows children to feel a sense of pride that their work is valued. The room is organised to provide them with a wide range of resources to choose from, and they have plenty of space to play. Children particularly relish the role play area, where they have lots of room to develop their imaginative play as they pretend to cook meals. They choose from an inviting range of books to look at, although there is no cushioned area for them to sit and read. Children often take the books over to adults and sit with them on chairs to listen to the story. However, the lack of a comfortable area means that they are unable to enjoy a quiet few minutes in a soft and relaxing area should they wish to take time out to look at a book.

Children are kept safe because effective procedures are carefully planned to ensure that risks are properly identified and managed. Staff are vigilant at all times to keep children protected. Each session, arrival and departure times are carefully supervised to ensure that children do not leave the premises unaccompanied, and the hall door is locked at all other times to ensure children's safety.

Children are protected from possible harm and neglect because staff at the pre-school have good knowledge of current procedures with regard to safeguarding children's welfare. This knowledge is underpinned by a comprehensive child protection policy. Parents are made aware of the pre-school's responsibilities because relevant information is displayed on the setting notice board.

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

The provision is good.

Children of all ages are settled and happy at the pre-school. They are familiar with the routine of the session, and this enables them to become confident because they know what is likely to happen next. For example, when staff tell children they have five more minutes of play before they need to tidy up, children know to finish off what they are doing. They then all participate in a quick and purposeful tidying away of activities in readiness for snack time.

Children choose from a wide variety of activities that are thoughtfully planned to encourage them to explore new challenges whilst having fun. Children demonstrate good levels of concentration, and focus on their play for long periods of time. This enables them to develop their ideas and pursue activities they find challenging. Children willingly take turns and share resources with one another.

### **Nursery Education**

Teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. The curriculum is well planned and thoroughly evaluated to consider the needs of all children who attend. Children learn through choosing from a wide choice of planned and spontaneous activities which are both interesting and beneficial. Staff are very knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage and how children learn. This enables them to provide learning opportunities that are at an appropriate level to realistically challenge children without overwhelming them. For example, a child playing at the computer is finding the game very easy. A member of staff encourages her to attempt the game at a higher level. The child then has to consider her answers more carefully. She completes the game without any help, and is obviously pleased with her own achievement.

Children's learning is carefully observed and monitored to ensure that all children are making good progress. Assessments of children's development are thorough and informative, painting a clear picture of what a child can do. These assessments are then used effectively to identify what a child needs to learn next to enable further development. These next steps of learning are considered when planning the curriculum, to ensure that children will have opportunities to develop in the identified areas of learning. This process, which is shared with parents, allows children to move forwards with their learning through a specifically planned play based curriculum.

Children are confident speakers and can express themselves in a coherent and articulate manner. Staff encourage them to communicate their thoughts and ideas through discussion and by listening carefully to what children say. Children demonstrate good listening skills and enjoy stories. For example, all of the children are completely enthralled by the story about a hungry caterpillar and give it their full attention. Many children demonstrate very good control when using pens and some can form recognisable letters. Children demonstrate a very good understanding of counting and calculating, and this is fostered by daily opportunities to use mathematics in the routine and in their play. For example, a child confidently counts that there are 18 children present that day.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities that promote their creative development. They show great enjoyment when playing at the water tray, or in the role play area. Children are encouraged to explore their senses during activities, such as smelling the oranges as they are squeezing them to make juice. They have frequent opportunities to enjoy art and craft activities

which allow them to develop their creativity and physical skills. However, children do not have daily opportunities to express themselves freely in painting and sticking activities, and this limits their opportunities to experiment with using a range of media in a manner of their choosing. Children learn about the world in which they live through following a range of topics. They show interest in the natural environment, and spend time observing features of the outdoors during their play.

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

The provision is good.

Children show a sense of belonging to the pre-school. They are kind and considerate to one another, and show great confidence and self-esteem. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is being fostered. Staff provide very good role models for the children. They display a calm and sensitive attitude that enables the children to work harmoniously with one another. Children manage their own behaviour well, and staff are highly skilled at knowing when to intervene to diffuse a situation and when to allow children to handle conflicts themselves. Children have clear rules of behaviour which they all know, and which are illustrated by a wall display. Staff are consistent in their approach to children's behaviour and this provides children with a clear understanding of what is required. Children learn about our diverse society through using a range of resources that reflect this. They also benefit from planned activities where they learn about a variety of different cultural celebrations.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given very good support to allow them to become fully integrated into the group, and to make good progress. The pre-school displays an inclusive approach where each child is valued as an individual, and whose needs are respected. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises effectively with parents, staff, and with other agencies to provide good quality provision that meets the needs of each child.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the strong relationship that exists between their parents and the pre-school. Parents are involved in their children's learning because they are given information about the curriculum and are consulted on their child's progression. They are able to see assessment records at any time, and can talk to their child's keyworker at the pre-school. Parents can also attend regular meetings where they are able to look at records and discuss their child's progress with staff. This enables them to gain a clear picture of how their child is progressing, and also enables them to contribute information from home, which the staff value greatly. Parents are welcome to help during sessions via a parent help rota. Many parents value this opportunity to gain a greater understanding of how their children learn at pre-school, as well as providing help and support for the children and staff.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the well-organised provision which runs smoothly and efficiently. Staff are well-trained and regularly update their knowledge through attending further training. They liaise with other settings at local cluster meetings which promotes discussion of new ideas and initiatives. The organisation of the setting is underpinned by a range of robust policies and procedures which ensure that children's needs are met and that they are kept safe. Efficient systems are in place to ensure that adults working with children are properly vetted and have knowledge of key policies and procedures.

Leadership and management are good. The pre-school is managed by a committee of parents who liaise closely with the supervisor and administrator to provide coherent and effective organisation. Regular meetings between staff and committee provide opportunities for sharing of ideas and planning future developments. Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to consider several points to improve the provision of care and education. All have been suitably addressed. Newsletters produced for families of the pre-school are informative, and do not mention individual children by name. All staff adopt a consistent approach to managing children's behaviour that is also detailed in the setting's behaviour management policy. Children now benefit from all elements of the session, and their interest is maintained throughout. For example, at snack time they talk to adults and to one another whilst they eat and drink. This time is well managed and brief, ensuring that children do not become bored. Children also benefit from a number of opportunities to enjoy music in the curriculum. Staff have attended relevant training to increase opportunities to enjoy music with the children, and now they enjoy using musical instruments, as well as singing and musical movement.

### **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.

## **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):

- develop the book area to make comfortable provision for children who wish to sit quietly and look at books

#### **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 daily opportunities for children to express themselves freely through the use of art and craft materials.

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)