



Ace Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 206189 |
| Inspection date | 27 February 2007 |
| Inspector | Justine Ellaway |
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| Registered person | Austin Community Enterprise |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | 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.

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?

Ace Nursery is run by Austin Community Enterprise, a voluntary sector organisation managed by a committee. It opened in 1999 as an out of school club and developed into a nursery in 2003. It operates from a converted health clinic on the Austin Estate in Derby. A maximum of 74 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 172 children aged from birth to under eight years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local community. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs sixteen members of staff, including a cook and a cleaner. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted at the nursery. There are effective hygiene procedures implemented through the daily routine. It is a clean and tidy environment. Staff clear up any mess made during activities and there is a no shoes policy so that the floors are clean for children to play on. The nursery cook has taken a higher level food hygiene course to promote children's good health when meals are prepared.

The risk of infection is minimised and the good health of children maintained as nappy changing procedures are appropriate. Staff wear disposable gloves and aprons and wipe down the mat with anti-bacterial spray after each change. A clear sick child policy is in place and shared with parents to protect children from the risk of spread of infection. Children use liquid soap and paper towels for hand washing, and know to throw their paper towels in the bin when they have finished.

Children receive appropriate care when they have an accident or become ill to maintain their good health. There is a clear accident and injuries policy and clear and detailed records are maintained of any accidents, which are shared with parents. A high number of staff have a first aid qualification. There is a clear policy for administering medication and appropriate records are maintained which include relevant signatures. However, written parental permission has not been requested for emergency medical treatment and advice to ensure that children's health needs are fully promoted in the event of an emergency.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to be active and develop their physical skills. There is good promotion of the development of children's large muscle skills in the pre-school room. The doors are constantly open to the covered outdoor play area, which is fully enclosed and is a stimulating environment for children to play. They thoroughly enjoy playing games such as hopscotch or basketball as well as playing with balls and other small equipment such as stilts. They also enjoy participating in other outdoor activities such as looking for insects or feeding the birds. The pre-school children are appropriately challenged in their small muscle development. They ably use tools such as scissors and cutlery.

Babies and young children have a good amount of space to move about. Staff encourage the children to move and crawl by the positioning of toys and resources and their interaction. The children's needs are well met in terms of their sleeping and eating routines. Staff follow each child's individual routine and are very able in identifying the triggers, for example, when a child is hungry. Toddlers are encouraged to be active both indoors and outdoors. They play outside twice a day and enthusiastically climb, roll and jump on the soft play equipment indoors. As a result their physical skills are well promoted.

Children are well nourished. They enjoy a healthy snack of fruit twice a day. There is a varied lunch menu including healthy options. Although the nursery uses some processed foods, there are a good proportion of meals that are made from scratch. The cook ensures the menu is balanced over the week and takes into account things such as salt levels to ensure they are appropriate. Alternative meals are provided for children with dietary needs. The cook is proactive in talking to parents about the content of the meals so that they are informed about what their children are eating.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright and attractive environment. There are colourful displays and well laid out parent notice boards which are welcoming. Photographs of the children are displayed in the rooms and the children enjoy looking at them and talking about what they are doing. This effectively promotes a sense of belonging.

The well organised space means that each room has a good amount of space for children to move around freely and engage in different types of activities. All of the available space is very well used in the pre-school room with a good flow between the indoors and outdoors. Children enjoy playing with a good range of toys and resources. They are stored and displayed so that children can help themselves, which they do frequently, which promotes independence. Staff lay out a selection of toys and resources at the end of each day so that when children arrive the next morning they can immediately begin playing. As a result children feel comfortable and are purposefully engaged in play. There are a good range of toys and resources for children who attend the out of school club to ensure they are occupied whilst at the nursery.

Children's safety is well promoted within the setting. There is a clear and detailed risk assessment which is updated each month. There are also clear written health and safety guidelines, which include useful information such as the arrival and departure procedure for parents. Children's safety is well promoted when they go outside, either on outings or for outdoor play. A clear written policy details the high staff ratios that operate when children go on outings and the procedures to follow if a child is lost. Staff always supervise the children when they are outside and the play areas are fully enclosed.

Children's welfare and safety is well promoted with regards to child protection. Staff are clear in their knowledge of the different types of abuse and possible signs and symptoms. The designated person is clear on their role for reporting and ensuring all relevant agencies are notified. The setting demonstrates a commitment to ensuring children's safety in this area, as they are currently updating written documents to reflect recent changes and identifying refresher training for staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The nursery is a friendly and calm environment where children feel comfortable and secure. Children are very happy and enjoy their time at the nursery. They purposefully engage in play

throughout the day, choosing what they want to do which promotes their decision-making skills.

Children are involved in a good range of planned activities and play opportunities which are appropriate for their age and stage of development. They engage in free play, messy play, singing and outdoor play. The "Birth to Three Matters" framework, is used effectively to provide appropriate activities for younger children. Staff make good use of observation and assessment to promote children's learning and development. They identify what activities they are going to do based on children's next steps and how they will support children in their learning. Staff interaction is good in both the baby and pre-school room and mostly effective in the toddler room. Staff use appropriate questioning to encourage children's thinking and learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. They know the different areas of learning well and how children progress. They are able to give good examples of how to promote the different areas of learning. Planning is meeting the needs of the children in the room. Although the written planning does not give lots of detail about individual children, staff are very clear how they will be challenged or supported through an activity. They are effective in ensuring this is delivered. The staff in the pre-school room work together to prepare the planning and demonstrate a sense of ownership and understanding of what they are trying to achieve. Staff are clear when they are doing a particular activity what the learning intention is.

Appropriate systems are in place to monitor children's progress which are updated regularly. Good methods are employed to help children progress. Staff are skilled practitioners who use a variety of methods for example, modelling, instruction, explanation and are encouraging in the way they interact with the children. They are very effective at letting children try something for themselves and encouraging them to persevere with tasks, for example, finding their peg and hanging up their coat. They are also very effective at identifying how they will help children to learn who are not naturally drawn to certain things. For example, a child is not naturally drawn to the book corner, so staff use books featuring his favourite characters to help him develop reading skills. The use of time and resources is good, children can engage in play for long periods of time because they are allowed to choose what they do, for example, play outside. Staff give careful consideration to the range of resources they will have for different activities, for example, when looking at different vegetables, they buy a range of different squashes for the children to look at.

Children are motivated to learn and will persevere at tasks. A child is throwing a hoop on the hopscotch mat to try and get it on a particular number and perseveres for a long period of time until he succeeds. Children are confident and independent. They are able to choose what they want to do, they do not have to ask a staff member to find something for them to do. Children play well together in groups and take turns, for example, when they are waiting for their turn on the computer. They are very independent, which is well promoted by staff. At snack time children choose what they want to drink. They pour their own drinks and select their own snack. Children ably communicate with others and are constantly talking whilst they are playing. They make relevant comments and contribute to discussions, for example, when a staff member asks

what has happened to the daffodils a child describes this to others. Children use language to explain what they are doing and in the role play area. More able children are linking sounds and letters and can say what letter their name begins with. They have opportunities to look at rhyming as staff rhyme each child's name at circle time. Most children enjoy looking at books and access the book corner frequently, sometimes independently and sometimes with staff. Children attempt to write their own names with recognisable letters and have good opportunities to write for different purposes.

Children have good opportunities to develop number recognition as staff use numbers frequently during the daily routine. For example, they use numbers to signify how many pieces of fruit children can have at snack time. More able children recognise the numbers one to nine. There are opportunities for matching, combining and recognising groups of objects. Children ably use size language to describe different things, for example, the toys they are playing with. They attempt complex jigsaws puzzles and solve how they fit together. They recognise simple shapes and begin to put them into size order.

Children have lots of opportunities to investigate objects and materials and use their senses through a range of well planned and interesting activities. They regularly use the garden to look at insects and try and find worms following an activity looking at feeding the birds. Good consideration is given to the content of the tuff spot so that each day different things are added. Children spend long periods of time exploring the textures of the materials and finding hidden toys. Children have some opportunities to design and build, although the range of resources available is not always fully varied. Children enjoy playing with the computer and manage simple programmes well. There are good opportunities for children to develop a sense of time as there are frequent discussions about what they have done and are doing and staff talk about things such as seasons.

Children recognise different colours and have discussions about these during the day. They have good opportunities to explore different textures through the range of materials in the tuff spot. Children enjoy singing and can sing simple songs from memory. They enjoy planned opportunities to do music and movement. There are lots of opportunities for free drawing and painting and children talk about what they have drawn with staff. They frequently engage in role play and will dress up and pretend they are different characters. Children enjoy doing art and craft activities, although the range of resources is sometimes prescriptive.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are met. For example, babies receive good support when they are tired or hungry. Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of the children they care for. There is a clear settling-in policy to support new children. Staff are very reassuring and let children do things in their own time. As a result children feel comfortable in the nursery.

Good support is given to children with special needs and their parents. Staff are clear about what children's individual targets are and keep detailed information and work with parents and external agencies. A clear policy is in place which explains to parents what steps will be taken to provide appropriate support.

Children behave well whilst at the nursery. Staff fully promote children's self-esteem through praise and encouragement and are effective role models. Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with calmly and consistently. Staff get down to the child's level and explain why the behaviour is not appropriate. As a result children develop an understanding of right and wrong. Children work harmoniously with others. They play well together and share concern, for example, a child gives another child a ball when he has been patiently waiting to join in a game. There is a clear behaviour management policy and a display of the methods to be used in each room to promote consistency of care. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

An effective partnership with parents and carers ensures that children's needs are met. An attractive notice board in each room contains useful and relevant information both about the nursery and on issues for parents. The information brochure also contains relevant information for new parents. The setting gathers the views of parents and acts on any suggestions that parents place in the suggestions boxes within each room. There is a clear complaints procedure that meets the requirements of the standards. Parents receive regular verbal feedback and a written report twice yearly detailing their child's progress. As a result consistency of care is promoted.

Equality of opportunity is suitably promoted and as a result children develop an understanding of the wider world. There are suitable resources including dressing-up clothes and play food from different countries which are usually available for children to play with. Children learn about a varied range of festivals including Divali and Chinese New Year.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with good quality information about the setting in a format that is easy to understand what children will learn. A display of photographs supports this. Parents are well informed about children's achievements as staff talk to them about what they have observed the children doing. They also receive a twice yearly written report. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child through informal discussion with staff. They receive information about the topics so they can encourage their child to bring things in from home which are displayed on an interest table. However, although it has been discussed how parents can be involved in identifying their child's starting points, this has not yet been implemented within the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery has a friendly and committed staff team who demonstrate a real sense of passion about what they do. They are very positive in their interaction with the children and other members of staff and take pleasure in talking to all of the children in the nursery. The deployment of staff is good within the setting and adult child ratios are always met. Staff rotas ensure that there is sufficient cover at all times of the day.

Effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected. Staff are clear that adults who have not had a Criminal Records Bureau check cannot be left alone with children. Thorough induction procedures ensure that staff are clear on their role and responsibilities and become familiar with the policies and procedures. This positively impacts on the care provided for children.

There are good arrangements for staff to share information which promotes consistency of care for the children who attend. There are regular staff meetings, one to one sessions as well as a yearly appraisal and mid year review. Staff demonstrate a commitment to improving their knowledge and skills as they regularly attend training. They have recently attended Birth to 5, Mark Making and Writing and Role Play sessions amongst others.

There is a clear and detailed operational plan in place which is well organised. Information is easy to find and understand. All staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the policies and procedures. All of the required documentation is held on file for each child who attends. As a result consistency of care is maintained. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of funded nursery education is good. There is strong and clear leadership within the nursery. The management team work well together, they regularly communicate with each other and share ideas. They are committed to improving the quality of care for the children who attend and are continually self-evaluating practice. A pragmatic approach to the nursery's strengths and weaknesses means that areas for improvement are quickly identified and the managers are unafraid to make changes or difficult decisions to benefit the children who attend. For example, the setting moved staff around the nursery for a short period and asked them to evaluate the practice within the different rooms.

Regular observations of staff working with the children means that the Nursery Manager has a clear and realistic view of practice within the setting. Good systems have been developed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education. Children's development records are regularly reviewed. The Manager also 'tests' what the child can do to ensure that what has been recorded is accurate.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the setting was asked to consider how children are grouped together to ensure their needs are met effectively; to collate the operational plan to make it more accessible for parents, staff and at inspections; to increase the frequency of fire evacuation practices; to ensure all staff are vigilant regarding children's safety; to record more detail in the medication, accident and incident books; to ensure staff follow the behaviour management policies and procedures in order to promote good role models for children; and to ensure written information is available to all parents regarding the educational provision.

The setting has expanded the number of rooms available so that the babies, toddlers and pre-school children all have their own base room. As a result children's individual needs are met effectively. The operational plan has been organised so that it is clear and easy to understand. Parents and staff are made aware of its location. As a result consistency of care is promoted. The frequency of fire evacuation practises has been increased to include as many children as possible. As a result children are beginning to learn how to keep calm in the event of an emergency. Staff have discussed promoting children's safety at numerous staff meetings. Furniture has been changed so that staff can see the whole of the room at a glance. As a result children's safety is effectively promoted. Accident and medication records have been revised and contain relevant information and detail which promotes children's good health when they have an accident or are ill. Notices of the steps of managing inappropriate behaviour are

displayed around the nursery. Staff are clear and consistent in their management of behaviour. As a result children are developing an understanding of right and wrong. Clear written information is displayed for parents of funded children so that they know what their child will be doing in the Foundation Stage.

At the last Nursery Education inspection the setting was asked to provide opportunities for children to read and write during free play; to provide opportunities for children to listen and respond appropriately during stories and other activities, without the disruption of younger children; to continue to develop planning to include opportunities for children's gross motor skills development; to increase staff knowledge of the stepping stones to the early learning goals; to continue development of planning and evaluation of all activities; and to provide information to parents and carers for retention, which includes the stepping stones to the early learning goals.

The setting has set up a permanent mark making area and book corner, which children use frequently. As a result children make good progress in the areas of reading and writing. An expansion of the rooms available for children of different ages means that children in the pre-school can enjoy stories and other activities without interruption from younger children. A well resourced and stimulating outdoor area means that children's physical development is well promoted. Staff have attended various training events and become familiar with the Foundation Stage Curriculum to improve their knowledge and effectively support funded children. Planning has been continually improved and takes into account children's interests. There are regular evaluations of activities to identify improvements. As a result children's learning and development is well promoted.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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):

- ensure that permission is requested from parents to the seeking of any necessary medical emergency advice or treatment
- develop staff interaction with children in the younger age group to fully promote children's thinking and learning.

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 the partnership with parents and carers so that they contribute what they know about children's starting points.

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