

St Alphege Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 250123
Inspection date 09 May 2007
Inspector Teresa Marie Taylor

Setting Address Oliver Bird Hall, Church Hill Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 3RQ

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Registered person St Alphege 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 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?

St Alphege Pre-School Group opened in 1968. It operates from the main hall at Oliver Bird Hall, Solihull. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is open each week day during school term time from 09:30 to 12:00 except on a Tuesday, when the session is from 12:30 to 15:00. The group have access to a small, fully enclosed garden area.

There are currently 36 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 24 receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs five permanent staff. Of these four hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about good personal hygiene through the daily routine and the examples shown by staff. Self-care is encouraged and children are reminded to wash their hands before snack, after messy activities and after playing outside, although the children can not access the hand wash for themselves. Staff take positive steps to help prevent the spread of infection by ensuring the room is kept clean and discussing the reasons for good hygiene with the children. Children are further protected as all staff hold current first aid certificates and, when they are ill, staff follow good sickness and exclusion policies and have access to a list of reportable, communicable diseases. Staff record all accidents and ensure parental consent is in place prior to administering prescribed medication.

Children have a positive attitude to physical activity. They usually have access to the outside area each day, with access to a range of outdoor play opportunities, which promotes their co-ordination and physical development. They have daily physical play sessions indoors including parachute games and music and movement activities. Children receive good attention and support from the staff in developing their spatial awareness and children understand why exercise and fresh air is good for them.

Nutritional snacks are offered daily accompanied by good discussions which encourages the children to develop healthy eating habits. There is a set snack time. Children can freely access water at any time but snacks are all pre-prepared by the staff which reduces the children's opportunities to develop greater independence. There are displays and regular discussions on healthy eating. This has given the children a good understanding of what healthy food is and why it is good for them. Parents are encouraged to provide fruit and staff promote discussion on where the fruit comes from giving children a good understanding of fruit from around the world.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe and secure within the pre-school as staff are vigilant and are aware of where the children are at all times. A range of safe and suitable toys and equipment are provided for the children. Furniture is of a suitable design and conforms to safety standards. The environment is bright, colourful and very child-centred. Children are praised for their care and consideration for each other which develops their self-esteem. Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised as staff conduct daily checks to reduce potential hazards and, have completed a comprehensive risk assessment. The outside play area is fully enclosed and secure.

Rigorous steps are taken to promote safety in the setting and there are good policies and procedures in place to support the practice. Children learn about fire safety as the evacuation procedure is discussed, practised regularly and recorded, ensuring children understand the routine and could safely exit the group if the alarms sounded. Staff develop children's awareness of safety as they give clear explanations, for example, 'always hold the hand rail when using the trampoline'. All main doors are locked and there is a record of visitors. This ensures children are kept safe. The welfare of children is given high priority and accident and medication records are in place, up-to-date and countersigned by parents.

Children are safeguarded because there is a designated child protection officer and staff are familiar with the groups policy and procedure for reporting any concerns. Parents are provided with information on child protection and the policy and procedures are covered during induction with staff and students. All staff undertake child protection training ensuring their knowledge and skills remain up-to-date.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy, confident and sociable. Children are very enthusiastic on arrival at the group and they are eager to join their peers. There are very secure and trusting relationships between children and staff. Children have an excellent attitude. They are engaged in a suitable range of activities throughout the sessions. Staff know children's personalities very well and they are clear about how to support their individual needs. This ensures all children receive appropriate care and attention.

All children are very active. They become engrossed in their chosen activity and enjoy their time spent in groups or in one to one activities with staff. Children are independent in most aspects of their care, learning and play. They are excited by the physical play opportunities offered to them and join in with enthusiasm especially with the parachute games. They acquire dexterity as they learn to build with limited range of construction toys but a wide range of creative activities. Staff plan and provide a suitable range of activities but provide little free choice or self-selection. They do however constructively implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework which contributes to positive outcomes for children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing well through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They are comfortable in their surroundings and respond with affection to the staff team. The room is light, bright and attractive with many excellent photographic displays of children's work and activities. Children show confidence as they select what they wish to do or wait patiently to join a planned activity.

Children organise themselves to take turns, for example, as they play on the trampoline, carefully counting up to ten for each child's go. The present routine provides a suitable range and variety of daily activities and therefore children are able to consolidate their learning. They use mathematical language well and recognise shapes. Counting and number recognition is good with many children able to count confidently up to 20. Other areas of maths, for example calculation do not receive as much input from staff. Children develop a respect for each other and property, as staff encourage good manners, consideration and cooperation, such as when the children need to share favourite pieces of equipment. Children have a regular routine and behave very well.

Children benefit from the excellent understanding and knowledge staff have of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, the stepping stones and the Foundation Stage. This is evident in the planning which covers all the areas of learning, and the understanding staff have of what children are learning from play and activities. All staff are involved with planning and excellent use is made of observations and assessments to ensure children's individual needs are met. Parents are fully included in their children's individual learning plan and ongoing assessments.

Children appreciate the good variety of books, large and small, available to them and they are learning how to use books for facts and for stories. They enjoy looking at books on their own and with friends, always treating the books carefully. Staff display exceptional skills at extending the children's vocabulary as they encourage discussion in all activities including register and snack times. Speaking and listening skills are a priority and children speak confidently telling their news to the group and explaining what they have brought in. They are learning to be considerate when listening to others. Pictorial and written snack menus, and the use of name cards, ensures that the children are developing excellent early reading skills. They recognise their names and are encouraged to find their own name on arrival and place it in the post box. Children have some opportunities to develop writing skills but these are not consistently encouraged by the staff.

Staff are able to adapt learning to meet the needs of the individual child, ensuring that any children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language are given appropriate consideration and support.

Children are encouraged to concentrate on activities and are proud of their achievements. They are developing independence and have excellent self-esteem. Staff praise and encourage the children, who are happy and comfortable in the learning environment. Staff make good use of time and use their observations to evaluate their teaching. They have an excellent understanding of behaviour management using a quiet, calm and sensitive approach to which the children respond very well.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children have equal access to the range of resources and activities provided. They are treated as individuals by all staff, who ensure activities are suited to children's specific levels of understanding and need. The excellent working relationships staff have formed with both parents and outside agencies means each child's abilities and needs have been recorded, documented and are regularly assessed. This ensures all children including those with additional needs have their care and learning needs met well.

Positive relationships are formed and children work extremely well together, sharing and taking turns. They are well behaved, listen to others with interest and welcome visitors into the setting in a confident, appropriate and polite manner. Through the well-planned topics, children have many opportunities to engage in activities which enhance their learning and understanding of the wider community and the world around them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is very good as staff provide a positive environment, are consistent, use praise and encouragement freely and are calm in their approach to the children. There is a written behaviour management policy which works very well and is fully understood and implemented by the staff. There is a designated staff member for behaviour management and the policy is regularly discussed to ensure it remains effective and is appropriate for the children attending. This gives children security and encourages responsibility for their actions.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They are kept informed of their child's progress and development through daily exchange of information and by invitation to more formal meetings with staff to discuss their child's progress through the year. Parents are actively involved in their children's individual learning plans and are welcome at any time to comment

on the staff observations of their child's progress. Newsletters are provided for parents and carers regularly and give detailed information about forthcoming events and themes. All plans are displayed and are cross referenced to 'Birth to three matters' and the stepping stones. This gives parents an excellent picture of what the group has planned, what they are offering the children, and why.

A parent pack is given to all parents and includes the philosophy of the group, policy statements, child protection information and Ofsted details. Parents complete registration forms for all children with staff ensuring parents are aware of the consents required to provide a secure and safe environment. All policies and procedures can be provided in different languages to ensure parents are clear how the group operates and what their children are offered. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved with their children's learning. They are invited to help in nursery at any time, join the children on trips, share their knowledge of and discuss cultural events, languages, community events and to discuss their careers.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The group is well organised and offers a child centred environment which fosters children's development in all areas. Space is well organised but resources are under utilised. Staff are committed to ensuring that the children's individual needs are met. There is a very relaxed, happy atmosphere throughout the group with parents happy to share their knowledge of different cultures and experiences.

Communication between staff is very good, which enables them to meet children's individual needs well. Additional support is provided when needed, either because of staff leave or if children with additional needs attend, with the use of regular relief staff who are well known to the children. This ensures that the children continue to receive appropriate support and attention from staff they know well and are comfortable with. Documentation is well organised and filed securely. A comprehensive set of policies and procedures firmly underpins and supports the practice throughout the pre-school.

There is a very stable staff group but, if staff needed to be recruited there are formal recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure those working with children would be suitable to do so. Training is given high priority and opportunities are discussed with staff on a regular basis to enhance the care given to the children. All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and they work very well as a team.

The leadership and management of the nursery is good. The management team set high standards for themselves and the staff to maintain. They work with the staff and children and understand how things work on a day to day level. They have a clear vision for the nursery education with a strong focus on children's personal and social development. All plans for the future are shared with the staff and staff are fully involved in the observations and assessments of children's learning, evaluation of the groups activities and future plans. Strong support for staff is in place and training needs are identified as appropriate. The management team are aware of the strengths and some of the weaknesses of the setting and monitoring is done through hands on practice with the staff team and children. Staff's input into the planning process is valued and all staff contribute regularly. So, staff have an excellent understanding of individual learning needs and ensure the group is fully inclusive for all children.

The provision meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were requested to; ensure a record of complaints was maintained, confidentiality was maintained with regard to the accident record and, children's individual needs were met during bathroom routines. The group now have good systems in place for recording complaints, provide individual records of accidents and meet children's individual needs when visiting the toilets. This ensures that children's individual needs are met and children's and parent's confidentiality is maintained.

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 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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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):

- provide more opportunities for children to develop independence for self care, including at snack time
- provide further opportunities for children to self select activities in order to promote their curiosity, independence and imagination

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):

- ensure more opportunities are provided, and supported by staff, for children to write, make marks or symbols and extend their understanding of maths in every day activities.

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