

Amberley Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	156381
Inspection date	24 April 2007
Inspector	Sue Taylor
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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?

Amberley Nursery School is privately owned and registered in 2001. It operates from the ground floor of an adapted house in a residential area of Bexhill. A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open every weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 throughout the year, except for public holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 57 children aged from one to under five years on roll. Of these, 34 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a higher qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff follow clear and detailed procedures for cleaning, ensuring the premises are kept clean. Children are able to access a toilet within their age group area and this enables some independence. The use of liquid soap and paper towels, for hand washing routines, helps prevent cross infection. The toddlers learn about the importance of washing their hands before eating. This results in the older children washing their own hands automatically, with very little prompting by staff.

There are clear hygiene and health policies that inform parents of the exclusion times for infectious children, helping maintain the health of others. The nursery does not have provision for the cold storage of packed lunches and reminds parents regularly to provide ice packs, to prevent food from spoiling. The records for medication and accidents are clear with good detail. All staff are aware of children's individual needs, such as allergies, through written detail in the kitchen. Some photos of related children ensure they receive appropriate care.

The nursery has a good healthy eating policy. A specialist catering firm provides healthy and nutritious cooked meals. Menus are displayed for parents and the firm caters for individual dietary needs. The children who have these meals enjoy them. Other children bring packed lunches, the contents of which are healthy and varied. Children have regular drinks during the day and can ask for drinks when they want. However, there is no easy access throughout the day enabling them to freely control their own thirst needs. Very healthy snacks are available, for example, fresh or dried fruit. The older children get to decide when they have their snack. They demonstrate a good awareness of the procedures, as they wash their hands first.

Children have very good opportunities during the day to play outside. The space and layout enables them to have energetic physical play in the fresh air, contributing positively to their overall health. A fenced and barked area enables all children, including the toddlers, to develop skills in climbing, clambering and balancing. The babies sometimes go out for local walks in buggies, extending their opportunities for being outdoors. Activities and resources develop children's hand-eye coordination well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are very secure, with an intercom doorbell and CCTV system, enabling staff to monitor visitors. The staff have phone access in their rooms and all carry walkie-talkies. As a result, they can easily call on other staff should they need to, when they are on their own with a small group of children. Risks and hazards have been minimised, such as a newly installed fire alarm system and a safety gate at the stairs. In the garden the pathway used by children slopes. Children have great fun as they use this with their ride on toys. Groups of car tyres in good condition are securely bolted together, providing a buffer zone at the end for added safety. Children negotiate this pathway with confidence and have good control over the trikes and go-carts. The fenced area ensures young children can explore and play with the toys safely.

The resources in each room are age appropriate and in good condition. Children can access play materials and activities safely, as they are placed at low level. The toddlers can crawl and learn to walk in safety, with some low level fixtures to pull themselves up on. Staff give clear

explanations to children that help them learn how to keep themselves safe. They learn about crossing roads safely and have homemade resources to use in their play, such as a lollipop pole and traffic lights.

The staff are informed before they start work about the nursery's child protection procedures. The written detail is clear and staff are very aware of their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children's welfare. They have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. This ensures staff quickly recognise when a child is being abused and can act in the child's best interest.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and settle very quickly when they arrive. This is helped due to the close relationships they make with their keyworker and from being cared for by a consistent staff team. The planning for young children is in line with the Birth to three matters framework. This helps ensure activities and experiences are suitable, interesting and encourage their development. For example, the very young go to the park to see the flowers, learn familiar songs such as Baa Baa Black Sheep or explore a wide range of objects and materials, in addition to playing with toys.

The two-year olds have good opportunities for activities that support their on-going development. For example, they enjoy singing as a group with some children singing and dancing themselves as they play, whilst looking in the mirror. Their learning is supported well with some children recognising their written name and beginning to count. They investigate a range of natural and household items. They get to paint and explore different textures such as cornflour and water.

Daily sheets record some activities that a child has been involved in over the day and links their developing skills and abilities to the aspects of the Birth to three matters framework. Keyworkers devise targets for each child that helps support their individual learning needs.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making positive progress across all areas of learning. The staff ask good questions of children that get them to think. This helps with their problem solving processes. Staff have a clear understanding of how children learn and provide a wide range of opportunities for children to consolidate their abilities or develop new ones. The staff are enthusiastic and present activities in an interesting manner, that motivates the children to get involved.

The planning is about to change to ensure that the learning objectives are more focused on the Foundation Stage stepping stones. Activities are devised by staff that offer a balance over the day for quiet and active play, indoor and out. Children concentrate well as they play on their own, with friends or with staff. In addition to the group planning, each child has an individual learning plan where keyworkers concentrate on identifying the need to develop particular skills and abilities, specific to a child.

All staff make observations throughout the day. These are used to note children's progress in the Stepping Forward assessment profiles. Keyworkers have a good working knowledge of where their key children are in their learning, although not all assessment profiles are kept up

to date. This lessens the effectiveness of using the profiles in future planning, to ensure that all children are appropriately supported in their learning and that all aspects fully covered.

Children develop positive self-esteem as they develop good relationships with other children and the staff. They gain some independence skills as they decide when to have their snack, put their pictures in their work trays or make choices about their play. They communicate well as the staff spend time talking and listening to them. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books. However, the book area in one room is not very comfortable or welcoming to children. Activities help children develop fine motor skills that enable the development of effective writing skills, such as cutting, painting and drawing. They regularly 'write' during role-play scenarios.

Most children count with confidence and are beginning to understand simple calculation. They learn about measuring as they pour ingredients into cups when making salt dough. There is a wide range of resources to help children learn. However, not all staff are making good use of everyday routines or general activities to reinforce children's learning. Children learn about the natural environment, as they use the water butt that gathers rain off their playhouse, to water the plants they grow. They gain a sense of time as they watch ladybirds hatch or learn about the life cycle of the frog.

The children have a well-developed imagination and use this in their play or as they chat about their ideas. They make good use of resources around the room to develop story lines with their friends. For example, one child makes a fire hose out of cardboard tubes. Their craft work is valued and children are creative, making various models out of salt dough or recycled materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a sense of belonging, as they are very familiar with the nursery routines. Their work is valued and displayed around the rooms. They are able to use their work trays to keep personal items in, such as comforters or to store work to take home. The staff respect the children, for example, they will ask a child if they mind them writing on their work to explain to parents what they have done.

The nursery has a positive attitude concerning inclusion. All children are valued with their own needs met well. The nursery as a whole is beginning to use Makaton, as they communicate with all children. This helps the children who need to use Makaton not to feel different. All children have an individual learning plan, with more detail for those identified with additional needs. There are resources that positively reflect other cultures and backgrounds, although very limited in those relating to disability. Children learn about other countries and festivals in planned topic work. As a result, they gain a growing awareness of the wider world.

Children behave well as staff manage behaviour effectively. They use distraction and calm invention to prevent situations arising. They give time to children, allowing them to try to sort out the problem themselves. This helps children develop self-control and devise their own strategies. The staff act as good role models, being polite and respectful to the children and adults. This helps children learn about acceptable behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The nursery develops a very positive relationship with parents. There is good information about the nursery displayed, where parents can see policies and planning. Recent questionnaires

returned by parents show that they see the nursery as a homely environment with friendly staff who are always willing to talk about their child's progress. The daily sheets for the younger children ensure parents know about their child's day.

The partnership with parents of the nursery education children is good. They see the planning that shows how the Foundation Stage curriculum is covered and what activities their child is doing that day. Ideas of how parents can assist their child's learning at home are on display. Staff share the individual learning plans and assessment profiles with parents. However, as some profiles are not fully up to date, this information is less effective in informing parents of the progress their child is making towards the early learning goals. Following recent parent consultations, some profiles record the discussions that were had, demonstrating effective communication about a child's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The thorough and clear recruitment procedure helps ensure staff are suitable to work with children. The detailed induction process provides new staff with information about the nursery routines and policies before they start working with children. The staff work well as a team, with effective communication that helps the day run smoothly. All relevant policies and records are in place and shared appropriately with parents. There is a complaint policy though the written information does not fully reflect the regulatory detail. Children benefit from the well-organised environment and day.

Leadership and management are good. Training is encouraged and most staff are qualified to more than the required level. The nursery supports the staff's professional development well through regular appraisals and meetings. This helps create a committed staff team who integrate care and education well. The owner regularly monitors the nursery systems. However, the method used is not always effective as some profiles are not up to date. The nursery has development plans in place and makes good use of other agencies for support and advice. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Good progress has been made since the last care inspection. Children are protected from persons who are not vetted and supervised well during sleep or rest times. The maintenance of the premises is an on going project. However all areas of the premises are clean and temperatures checked. For example, although the outside toilets are not ideal they are regularly monitored and kept clean. All required documentation is in place and reviewed regularly.

Progress since the last nursery education inspection is good. As requested the nursery shares detail about the progress children are making in all areas of learning. They provide some detail about how parents might support their child's individual learning at home. They were asked to consider expanding the planning to more accurately detail the learning intentions of focused activities. This was completed and provides a better record of what aspect is being covered and informed all staff. Since this a new system has been devised that will be clearly linked to the stepping stones in each area of learning.

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.

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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):

- ensure all children have easy access to drinking water throughout the day
- amend the complaints policy to fully reflect the regulatory detail

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):

- keep all children's records of progress up to date and ensure they are used effectively in future planning to ensure all Foundation Stage aspects are fully covered
- develop a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation process to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and assessment process

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