



Almonds pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219184
Inspection date	23 June 2005
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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

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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Almonds Pre-School originally opened in 1966 and changed ownership to its present provider in 1996. It operates from two rooms in Bromham village hall. It is situated in the heart of the village of Bromham. A maximum of 60 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each week day from 09:05 to 13:00 for 39 weeks of the year.

There are currently 79 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 53 receive

funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area, including other surrounding villages. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and there are systems in place to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eleven staff. Six of the staff, including the pre-school leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a qualification and four staff have extensive experience.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning the importance of health and hygiene through following daily routines, which include washing their hands before food and changing their shoes when they are inside. However, staff provide a bowl of water with no soap and the older children are not always aware of the reasons why they are following these routines. Good procedures are in place for nappy changing and toileting, with staff wearing gloves when dealing with bodily fluids, ensuring the prevention of infection.

Children benefit from a healthy diet where all snacks are nutritious and prepared on site. Children benefit from access to water at all times; the older children can help themselves and staff offer drinks to younger children at regular intervals. For example, when a younger child comes across to the hatch area and asks politely for some water, staff attentively listen to the child's request and meet the child's individual need without hesitance.

All children are encouraged to be as independent as possible by using the toilets and changing their own shoes. Matching tabards and shoe bags aid this learning process. However, children select play experiences from a pre-selection made by staff and do not have the opportunity to contribute their own ideas and suggestions.

All the children enjoy daily indoor and outdoor activities, which enables them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. For example, all children have access to age appropriate wheeled toys, climbing apparatus and small equipment. Occasionally, older children are able to visit the nearby park where they have access to challenging play equipment. However, some indoor apparatus does not always present sufficient challenge for the older and more able child. Such as, the T-bar see-saw which children managed confidently without any difficulty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The modern design of the setting minimises children's risk of accidental injury. The setting uses space creatively and areas are set aside for dedicated activities. The children have access to a wide range of quality resources. Children are initially keen to play, but interest subsides as the session progresses.

Staff give excellent priority to security of the premises and the supervision of the children. Parents have a clear understanding of the safety policy and adhere to the direction that only members of staff open the door. Staff monitor visitors to the setting. Relevant risk assessments are completed on a daily tick chart. However, staff fail to use information about accidental injuries to prevent further occurrences and therefore minimise risks to children. Staff record fire evacuation procedures, checks and drills with suitable frequency.

All staff hold Criminal Records Bureau checks and abide to supervising unvetted persons appropriately. A member of staff holds the responsibility of Child Protection in the setting and has received suitable training in this field. This ensures children are protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and keen to participate in the activities offered. They are confident in making independent choices as they freely access the pre-selected resources set out for them. They play together co-operatively, taking turns and sharing equipment. For example, younger children communicate amongst themselves as they express their own ideas and thoughts when putting imaginary food into the oven. Although staff are aware of the Birth to Three Matters programme they have yet to implement this in practice. Therefore, some younger children are lost in the learning process as there are no developmental records for children who do not receive nursery funding.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most children are making steady progress through the Foundation Stage. Staff use their knowledge and experience to provide a suitable variety of play experiences. These keep children happily occupied, but do not always challenge the older, more able child. Children lose interest as they wander and flit between activities. Much of the play equipment set out for children does not have any clear, identified learning intention. This leads to a heavy reliance upon staff's individual abilities to extend learning through play and variable quality of interaction.

Staff have limited training in the Foundation Stage, covered initially through their childcare courses. Although planning is thorough, complex and multi-layered systems are beginning to complicate and detach from the curriculum guidance. Planning systems are based upon activities because staff misunderstand the purpose of the stepping stones. For example, session plans do not correlate with the stepping stones and lack sufficient detail to fully support the development of children's learning. This results in not all aspects of the Foundation Stage having sufficient emphasis to actively promote children's learning. Detailed observations and individual play plans identify the next steps in children's learning, however, frequency and maintenance of developmental records and the variance in staffs abilities to question children, impacts on an appropriate level of challenge being offered to support children in progressing their skills. For example, although the T-bar activity

was purposefully put out to enable children who could not manage balancing skills confidently, no further challenge was offered for children who already have this ability. No staff presence means children use equipment in their own way. This was largely as a quick passage up and over whilst walking from activity to activity.

Practitioners generally manage children's behaviour appropriately, but put much effort into supervising/policing activities rather than promoting learning.

Caring staff ensure children with special educational needs are able to join in all activities. For example, a child with long term illness is well supported by staff upon her return after long absence and another child is set the task of ordering numerals 1-30 on the floor because he is unable to stand.

Children are happy and settled and show a strong sense of belonging, and are developing friendship groups. They are confident in both small and large group situations and generally show a caring attitude towards others. They are beginning to learn how to take turns through playing games. For example, children happily initiate a game of 'Whats the time Mr Wolf' and play enthusiastically; negotiating who is still in the game and who has been caught out. Children are generally involved in their play, although this does tend to focus on areas with adult supervision. They are beginning to assume some responsibility for their personal care, although staff do not explain the reasons for this.

Children speak with growing confidence and share their experiences with others. They listen well to stories, join in responsively, and have books readily available at all times. Children are beginning to assign meaning to marks; however, there is insufficient attention to developing their skills with sounds and letters. They have some opportunities to write and give meaning to their marks. They are beginning to count and recognise different shapes; however, there is insufficient emphasis on comparison of number and solving simple mathematical problems.

Children develop a sense of time and place through group and individual discussions and through the daily routine. Children have many opportunities to observe natural objects both inside and outside, and they enjoy exploring the world around them. Children use the computer and technological toys. They are developing their knowledge of other cultures and beliefs.

Children develop their physical skills through a wide variety of activities both inside and outside the building. These include activities to develop hand eye co-ordination and large physical movements. However, there is insufficient emphasis on developing children's understanding of health and bodily awareness. Children follow routines such as washing their hands but are not clear about the reasons for doing this. They experience a wide variety of a media when doing various kinds of art and craft, although staff tend to direct such activities and insufficient extension is given to meet the needs of the more able child. Children's imagination develops through a variety of role-play activities, including a home corner, shop, office and hairdressers. They have regular opportunities to sing songs and play musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from the local village community and children with special needs are warmly welcomed and included in all activities. Children develop their understanding and appreciation for other cultures through seeing labels in different languages, and activities that promote a greater awareness of the various cultures in the wider world. This enables the children to develop a positive attitude to others. Children are learning how to take turns and show concern for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff develop very positive partnership with parents to support children's progress in learning. Parent helpers are highly effective in the setting, enabling increased adult to child ratios which support children well. Staff and parents share important information about the children who receive nursery education. This two way sharing benefits the child and enhances their learning. Parents are warmly welcomed into the provision and actively participate in fundraising events. They attend fun days and coffee mornings, which give the child the opportunity of sharing their experiences with their parents. Parents are able to see their child's progress records on request and contribute them. The partnership with parents is good.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Senior staff are qualified and have an appropriate understanding of the needs of the children in receipt of nursery funding and of the Foundation Stage. However, they do not always monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and they rely on newly trained colleagues to cascade their knowledge. This is not proving effective in securing continued improvement in teaching and learning. Regular reviews, appraisals and monitoring of staff is in place, although these do not always pick up gaps in the teaching and learning, particularly with the over threes. Recording systems do not fully show the achievements of more able children. Staff are keen to listen and learn and take on suggestions for improvement in order to continue to promote children's learning in the best possible way. Induction training and a sound set of policies and procedures ensure the children keep healthy and safe and have a wide variety of play and learning experiences. Taken overall, the provision does meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last Children Act inspection recommended that the child protection policy required review to include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a staff member. This has been revised. It also raised the restriction of the kitchen area to children. Access to the kitchen area for the younger children is actively implemented. There is a notice on the door and staff deployment supports the supervision of children when accessing this area. However, older children's safety is periodically compromised as the kitchen door remains open when the cooker is not in use. Staff fail to identify potential hazards to protect children from

harm as risk assessment systems are poor.

The last nursery education inspection gave one point for consideration. The setting was to review the short term plans to accurately reflect the range of activities and resources that are provided for the children to use. The 'What have we got out today' record has achieved this goal.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- revise current risk assessments to ensure effective implementation of safety measures; monitoring accidental injuries appropriately and informing the relevant authorities
- develop practice to enhance provision for children under 3, for example, through the use of the Birth to Three framework and developmental records

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 ways to increase the opportunities for independence and self selection of toys and equipment and extend the children's understanding of self care
- develop planning and assessment further, to clearly show the learning intentions and reflect accurately the child's achievements against the stepping stones
- develop ways to ensure all aspects of the Foundation Stage are covered by offering interesting and stimulating activities, which also provide sufficient

challenge for the older and more able children

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