

Aveley Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	401544
Inspection date	09 May 2007
Inspector	Lisa Paisley
Setting Address	The Discovery Centre, Stifford Road, Aveley, South Ockendon, Essex, RM15 4AA
Telephone number	01708 864747
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Registered person	Linda May Mills
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?

Aveley Pre-school is a privately owned setting. It opened in 1997 and moved to new premises in 2006. The pre-school operates from a room in the Aveley Discovery Centre within the grounds of a local primary school in Aveley, Essex. A maximum of 21 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 and 13.00 to 15.00 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 69 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 68 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The pre-school employs seven staff. Four of the staff, including both managers, hold an appropriate early years qualification. Three staff members are currently attending training. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

A good variety of healthy and nutritious snacks are offered to the children and snack time is a social occasion, which the children clearly enjoy. Fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the session and children are able to help themselves independently. Children display enthusiasm in making choices from the different fresh foods available including cheese, bread sticks, bananas, dried raisins, carrot sticks, apples and toast. As a result, children are beginning to understand the importance of a healthy diet. Staff maintain good written records for each child to ensure their individual health and dietary requirements are met. Consequently snacks that are offered are suitable for the children's individual dietary needs and preferences.

Children are learning about the importance of good personal hygiene through well established daily routines, such as washing their hands after creative activities and before snack time. They are also encouraged to wipe their nose when needed and discard the tissue appropriately. Children have access to hot and cold water, tablet soap, a hand dryer and paper hand towels minimising the potential risk of cross-infection. All documentation in relation to children's health, such as medical and accident forms are in place and signed by the parents. All of the staff are first aid trained and a first aid box, with all the required items in place, is accessible to the staff. These ensure children receive good care and attendance in the event of an accident or administering medication.

All children enjoy regular opportunities to engage in physical activities and have access to a range of outdoor play equipment to support their whole bodily movements. For example, children confidently use tricycles, scooters, balls and hoops. They particularly enjoy balancing on balancing boards, going over and through the large play caterpillar and jumping into hoops. Children use a wide range of tools and equipment to promote their finer manipulative skills, such as scissors, puzzles and threading activities. As a result, children are making good progress in all aspects of physical development and their skills are challenged appropriately.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. All areas of the pre-school are risk assessed by the staff so that any potential hazards to children can be identified and minimised or removed. Staff also carry out daily checks of the areas used by children, ensuring each play area is safe before children arrive. For example, the main entrance is secure and radiators are appropriately protected and the kitchen is inaccessible to children. However, there are some minor risks to children in the garden as the area is small and children use the area vigorously with enthusiasm causing minor accidents. There are clear procedures for the arrival and departure of children, ensuring that they arrive and leave the premises safely. Fire evacuation procedures are in place ensuring children and staff know how to evacuate the building quickly and safely. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as staff provide consistent, gentle reminders such as no running inside, tidying away toys and sitting sensibly.

Staff have good awareness of how to organise space, furniture and equipment effectively enabling children to move freely with independence around activities and different play areas. As a result, children feel confident within the pre-school and are safe and secure. Children benefit from using a good range of toys and play equipment which are of a good quality and

maintained to a very high standard. Children self-select their own play resources which are appropriate to their ages and stages of development, fostering choice and independence.

Children are effectively protected by staff that have a very good awareness of child protection procedures and know how to put these into practice to safeguard children's welfare. A written policy is in place and staff are able to recognise signs of abuse and know who to contact if they are concerned about a child in their care. A named staff member is responsible for child protection and they have a clear understanding of their role, through attending training and keeping up to date with any changes such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Parents are informed of the group's responsibility regarding child protection, reassuring parents of their child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and are happy and settled due to staff relating to them sensitively and providing a wide range of activities which are interesting and stimulating. Staff know the children well, they greet them warmly on arrival at the pre-school, which makes them feel safe and secure. Routines provide opportunities for children to socialise with each other on a regular basis. Staff set out a range of activities, toys and equipment for the children, which enable them to make choices and extend their own play.

The pre-school has obtained the 'Birth to three matters' framework and staff have attended training. Positive steps have been taken to implement the approach into their practice, however, further familiarisation and consolidation is required to improve the quality of care and play experiences for young children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good and secure understanding of the Foundation Stage, early childhood development and how children learn. Activity plans are very detailed and comprehensive, covering all the required elements of the curriculum, including differentiation and assessments of activities. An effective key worker system is in place and staff consistently observe children's progress, ensuring all areas of their development is being effectively tracked. Staff use individual profiles linked to the stepping stones to record children's developmental progress, however, initial profiles are not completed in supporting staff to assess children's starting points in their development. Staff provide an enjoyable and stimulating learning environment to engage children's interests and enable them to enjoy their play and learning experiences.

Children are very happy and confident within the pre-school as they are keen to participate in the range of activities provided. They are developing positive dispositions towards their learning as they are interested in activities and are keen to complete self-chosen tasks. Children are encouraged to independently select resources and initiate their own activities and games. They show a strong sense of belonging as they greet staff and each other upon arrival. Children work well together and understand the importance of co-operation during group activities. For example, children negotiate with each other and agree turn-taking when engaging in activities such as water and sand play. They are confident and skilled speakers, using words effectively and a wide vocabulary to convey their experiences both real and imaginary. Children listen attentively to each other and join in enthusiastically during group story times. The book corner is warm and inviting for children where they can sit in small groups with their peers and the

staff looking at and talking about stories. Children particularly enjoy the story 'The Hungry Caterpillar' as they enthusiastically call out what happened next in the story. They confidently use tools and resources to make marks and older, more able children are beginning to write their own names independently. Children are developing a very good awareness of letter shapes and sounds, they benefit from seeing a wide range of letter print and staff sounding out letters through planned activities such as at circle time. Children are making good progress in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy as they confidently count up to 10 and beyond. They use numbers when counting and solving simple number operations, such as addition and subtraction through daily routines such as counting boys and girls during registration. Sand and water activities provide good practical experiences to explore different mathematical concepts such as capacity and weight, however there are limited cooking activities to further extend children's practical experiences.

Children have secure opportunities to find out about the natural world and they enjoy exploring their environment, for example planting sunflowers and learning about the life cycle of caterpillars. They talk with interest and enthusiasm about their own lives and learn about the work of people in the community, for example, the local police officer. However, there are limited opportunities to take trips out into the local community such as the library or local shops to further extend children's understanding of the wider world. They are developing very good awareness of the uses of information technology in everyday life and are able to operate equipment such as the computer, calculator and domestic items. Children's imaginations and free expression are effectively promoted as they have good opportunities to engage in role play such as the supermarket and home corner. They participate in a range of creative activities such as painting, sand, gluing, play dough and cornflour, developing self-expression and imagination. Children enjoy music and movement activities such as 'head shoulders knees and toes' where they practise tapping part of their bodies. Their physical skills are well promoted through a variety of mediums, such as hoops, balls, caterpillar tunnel, tricycles and scooters. They use small scale equipment safely and with increasing control. Consequently, as a result they are confident and have developed good control over their bodies.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by staff who work closely with parents to meet the individual children's needs. Their individual needs are discussed with parents in detail and the needs of children with learning disabilities are recognised, supported and sensitively met. Each child is valued and respected as an individual, as staff know the children's individual personalities well. Children benefit from having access to a suitable range of play resources which promote positive images of diversity, for example, books, puzzles, posters, dolls and dressing up clothes. Children participate in activities developing their awareness of diversity, ensuring an inclusive environment is provided for all children.

Children settle quickly at the pre-school as staff work well with parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Staff obtain information from parents before a child starts at the pre-school regarding their interests and abilities. This enables them to build on and develop children's previous knowledge, understanding and skills. Children are consistently very well behaved and they have a very strong sense of respect and caring for others, which is strongly promoted by staff. Children are well supported by staff who regularly use praise and encouragement to promote children's self-esteem. They learn to share play equipment and take turns and increasingly take responsibility for their own actions. Children have a very good

sense of self control through the positive role models that staff provide. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are fully included in the pre-school and are encouraged to contribute their ideas and knowledge. Parents are pleased with the service provided and feel information is shared well. They receive information about the pre-school policies and procedures, the routine of the sessions and how their child is going to be looked after. A notice board provides parents with all the required information including the Foundation Stage curriculum and training certificates. Parents are invited into the pre-school to discuss their children's developmental progress and children's learning in the home is encouraged through the use of 'Foundation Friends' and taking home story books. Regular special events are held for children, parents and carers, for example, sports day and teddy bears picnic. These ensure parents and carers are fully informed with regard to their child's developmental progress, topic work and any events or celebrations.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is supported and enhanced by the secure organisation of the pre-school. The use of available space within the pre-school is well organised, with clear areas for storage, play, food preparation, and changing children. These areas are well managed by staff to allow children to play, eat and rest safely and securely. The structure of the session is free play with an emphasis on children's choice, fostering independence. Documentation including policies and procedures and details relating to staff and children are obtained, recorded and stored appropriately, ensuring that the pre-school is meeting legal requirements relating to the National Standards.

Leadership and management is good. The manager, deputy and staff are very positive and professional in their approach. They understand early years development and the importance of providing children with a safe and stimulating learning environment. The staff work well together and they are all aware of their roles and responsibilities, as a result there is a positive and professional team spirit. Children benefit from the staff being interested in their own professional development and regular appraisals are held. The manager assesses the nursery's own strengths and weaknesses realistically through self-evaluation. Consequently, children are cared for by experienced, knowledgeable staff and benefit from continuity of care.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the group agreed to develop the operational plan so that it contains all the necessary information as set out in the National Standards (including procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff, and details of how to contact Ofsted in the complaints policy) and conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying actions to be taken to minimize identified risks. The operational plan is now in place containing all the required information for the smooth running of the pre-school. The pre-school has moved premises so this recommendation is no longer applicable, however, they now have improved procedures in place, for example, daily risk assessments with regard to minimising risks to children. As a result secure improvements have been made to the day to day running of the pre-school.

At the last education inspection the group agreed to plan more frequent activities that help children with calculation, and in linking sounds and letters, and provide activities to help children to learn about information and communication technology. Planning consistently covers all areas of learning, ensuring that calculation, sounds and letters and information technology are covered through planned topics and daily routines. As a result secure improvements have been made to the overall quality of nursery education.

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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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):

- further minimise risks to children by reviewing the outdoor area
- improve the outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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 children's assessment records to include initial profiles enabling staff to assess children's starting points.
- further extend cooking activities for children and their understanding of the local community through trips out.

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