



Alphabet Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY276060
Inspection date 15 June 2005
Inspector Susan Victoria May

Setting Address Chiltern Edge School, Reades Lane, Sonning Common, RG4 9LN
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Registered person Aftab Ahmed
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?

Alphabet Day Nursery opened in 2003. It operates from new purpose built premises within the grounds of Chiltern Edge School, Sonning Common. The nursery is within walking distance of Sonning Common village, near Reading, with easy access to the surrounding local area. It operates within three main rooms used by the children. The nursery serves the local and surrounding area.

There are currently 40 children from three months to five years on roll. This includes

ten funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children attend with special needs and English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08.00-18.00.

Five staff work with the children. More than 50 per cent have early years qualifications equivalent to NVQ level two or three.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive because staff follow policies and most procedures effectively to meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Children show developing body awareness and begin to recognise their needs. For example, they know if they are tired, they need to rest. Children are confident and demonstrate increasing independence in their personal care; however, staff do not always promote children's understanding of good hygiene through best practice.

Children explore, test and develop physical control in daily indoor and outdoor experiences. Staff have a keen knowledge of Birth to three matters. Their excellent understanding of each stage of development means the youngest children are confident to try out new skills, ask for help when needed and set their own limits within the safe environment. Older children enjoy physical exercise, participate enthusiastically in free play, and take part confidently in organised activities such as the music and movement session. Opportunities to increase control and co-ordination are available daily through a variety of activities. For example, in the outdoor play area where they climb over, through, and around the play equipment, and on regular visits to the local playing fields.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet. Staff take account of parent's wishes and the children's preferences to provide nutritious meals and snacks that appeal to children and meet their dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff identify and minimise risks for children in the secure, bright and spacious setting. This means within each area children are able to move around safely, freely and independently. Staff give high priority to helping the children understand how to keep themselves safe within the nursery and to maintaining safety standards outdoors. Staff have a clear understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits, and of how to involve children in organising the environment, this allows children to take 'risks' and develop strategies to protect themselves from harm. For example, using outdoor equipment, in a way they choose, to climb and play.

Children independently select activities from the broad range of high quality toys and equipment, which meets safety standards; Staff carefully monitor and provide children with a choice of toys and activities that are safe and appropriate to their age and stage of development. Regular communication with parents contributes to children's safety.

Children are very well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection issues and of the procedures to follow to safeguard the children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. Younger children achieve well because staff effectively use their skill and knowledge of early years guidance, such as Birth to three matters. Staff provide good quality care and education for older children to develop in all areas. However, they have not yet all had access to foundation stage training towards the early learning goals, to further enhance practice and children's progress.

All children arrive happy and eager to participate. Those who are new are helped to settle by staff that are sensitive to their individual needs. All children make good progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop their individuality. Children begin to make sense of the world, express their ideas and communicate effectively as they eagerly take part in the range of activities on offer.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have opportunities to enjoy a stimulating range of activities relevant to their needs. They access a broad range of good resources, which support their learning across all areas of learning. All children are keen to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. Children behave well and accept responsibility for their actions. They have a secure awareness of right and wrong, and show a good respect for others and their beliefs, cultures and traditions. They listen intently to stories and recall favourites. For example, a child asked for a specific book from the local library where they frequently visit. Children treat books with respect; however, there is limited access to a range of books on a daily basis, for example reference books. Children have opportunities to use marks relevant to their play and older children are adept at writing and recognising their own and others names. Staff liaise closely with parents to help children for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs to fully participate in the activities and make very good progress. Children use their imagination and are creative in expressing themselves, making sense of the world around them through a variety of media. They are inquisitive about their surroundings, use everyday technology confidently and wonder at changes they observe daily such as the weather.

Children work well together; for example, the older children help the younger children with their outdoor clothes. Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play

and respond to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines.

Staff have a clear understanding of children's skills, interests and needs. Planning by the senior staff provides a good balance of adult and child led activities to allow the children to develop at their own pace. Staff are perceptive to children's interests and extend their language and thinking skills successfully through questioning and dialogue. All staff are involved in observation, monitoring and recording of children's achievements and developing evaluation practices to help improve the quality of teaching and inform future planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery day because staff value and respect their individuality and the family circumstance for each child. Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff and older children support younger children in sharing and turn taking. Staff have high expectations and consistent boundaries for the children, which helps them to learn negotiation skills. Staff demonstrate an extremely positive approach to help increase children's understanding of right and wrong and children respond well to reminders to care for each other, resources and the environment.

Children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves and each other through topic work, everyday and planned activities. They explore the local area and develop a sense of community through visitors and outings. For example, regular trips to the library. This fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

An outstanding partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being in the nursery. Staff actively seek parent's views about the children's needs and interests before and during their time at the setting. Staff ensure all parents know how their children are progressing and developing. Children benefit greatly from the involvement of their parents, thereby contributing to their good health, safety, development and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are relaxed and settled in the well-organised nursery environment. This means they are confident to initiate and extend their own play. Indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for the children. Most documentation that contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is in place and regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from the care and skill of the staff who are effectively inducted and who demonstrate a clear understanding of

most nursery policies and procedures. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and progress, although the system to evaluate the provision to inform future planning is not yet fully developed.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

Improvement since the last inspection is good. To ensure the safety of children and adults on the premises all staff, visitors and children's attendance is accurately recorded. Staff hold fire drills regularly, and record them, as a result children evacuate the building promptly and safely.

Procedures for collecting children are effective in ensuring they only leave with designated persons, this protects them and helps keep them safe at all times

To keep parents fully informed about how to proceed with a complaint, the procedure now includes details of Ofsted's address and telephone number.

Complaints since the last inspection

Standard 2 - Organisation

Concerns raised over staff ratios at the setting. Ofsted asked the provider to investigate the concern and report to Ofsted within ten days. The provider has a contingency plan in place and staff are aware of this. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The concern raised related to Standard 6 - Safety, it was alleged that a small child had escaped from the nursery. We asked the Provider to carry out an internal investigation and to report to Ofsted within 7 days. The Provider responded and explained that due to their security procedures it would be physically impossible for a child to leave the nursery unaccompanied. The Nursery had not received any notification of any child leaving the premises. The Provider concluded that the complaint was malicious. As part of a recent inspection, the Child Care Inspector confirmed that the security at the Nursery was adequate.

The Provider remains qualified to be registered.

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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 access a variety of books independently on a daily basis
- ensure good hygiene practices are observed regarding bathroom procedures

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):

- increase opportunities for staff training in the early learning goals and the stepping stones towards them, and develop evaluation systems to effectively inform future planning

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