

The Athelstan Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109320
Inspection date	17 September 2007
Inspector	Sue Taylor
Setting Address	All Souls Church Hall, Athelstan Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN35 5JE
Telephone number	01424 446105
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Registered person	Athelstan Nursery
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?

The Athelstan Nursery is a committee run group and opened in 1978. It operates from a large church hall in the Clive Vale area of Hastings. It has sole use of the building during its hours of operation. A maximum of 36 children, aged from two to under five, may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:15 to 15:30, during term time only. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 58 children on roll, of these, 40 children receive funding for early education. Children generally come from the local area.

The nursery employs eight members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate Early Years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The daily routines followed by the staff, help provide a healthy environment for children. The toilets are checked regularly to ensure they are clean. Children are very aware of the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. The use of liquid soap and paper towels helps prevent cross contamination and staff guidance helps promote good hand washing. However, the effectiveness is lessened as there is no access to hot water, only cold.

The records for accidents and medication are well maintained. Parents receive a copy of the accident record and provide written consent for the administration of medication, ensuring they are fully aware of their child's treatment. Most staff have a current first aid certificate, so the group are well covered in being able to administer first aid, in the event of an accident.

Children have very easy access to bottled drinking water throughout the day. They willingly use the dispenser, knowing to put their used beakers in the bin. This enables them to control their own thirst needs. Staff encourage children to drink after physical play. The staff provide plates for children to use with their packed lunches and encourage good eating habits. The group supports children in having balanced diet options, providing parents with helpful guidance. Children benefit from healthy snacks, and get to try new tastes.

There are excellent opportunities for energetic physical play, both indoors and outside. The choice of resources to support children's physical development is very good. Children enjoy safe challenges, as they participate in the gymnastic awards or use the appropriate child friendly gym equipment. They have great fun trying to throw balls into the basketball nets or balance beanbags and hoops on their heads. Many planned activities encourage children's developing skills and abilities. Children's emotional development is supported well, through the good relationships they develop with the staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe during session times. The premises are secure, with effective procedures in place as children arrive or leave. The organised planning of the day, along with good supervision by staff, ensures children are safe as they use the various rooms. A risk assessment check is made daily by the manager to ensure hazards are minimised. Children are learning to keep themselves safe through explanations from staff. They are able to take some safe risks as they play, for example using 'tap a shape' or scissors.

The staff plan the session and provide a wide variety of activities for children, using good quality resources. Care is taken to ensure the play materials and equipment are age appropriate and safe, but offer challenges to children. The organisation of the day enables children to make safe and good use of resources, indoors and outside.

The staff have a good awareness of child protection issues. The named staff member has completed relevant training and is available for support, if required. Suitable guidance for staff is on site and helps ensure children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and settle very quickly in the friendly and welcoming environment. They are familiar with the routines and are keen to get involved in the activities. They enjoy playing with friends but are also quite content playing on their own. Positive interactions with the staff ensure children benefit from the planned activities. The Birth to three matters framework is incorporated, to some extent, in the planning to meet the needs of the younger children. There is a good selection of resources and activities put out for children. However, there is no system, whereby children can actively participate in the planning process. Key workers have a good knowledge of their key children, ensuring that their progress is noted and individual targets set. There is an effective balance of adult led activities and free play opportunities. Children get a lot of enjoyment out of the planned activities and happily move around the activities when asked.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The majority of the staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children are supported, through play, to make progress in their learning. The staff are involved in the planning process and this helps ensure that targets set for their key children are incorporated in the activities. The children respond very positively to the staff throughout the day. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The planning ensures that children's individual learning needs are met, as they take part in different activities to support or extend their abilities. The staff make observations and use these to assess their progress. There are assessment profiles that note children's progress in the six areas of learning. However, these do not fully show where children are in relation to their progress, through the stepping stones towards all of the early learning goals. Therefore, information about each child's level of learning and development relies on the staff member's own knowledge.

The staff are very involved with the children during the planned activities. They ask good open questions that get children to think. Activities are fun and interesting; this motivates children to want to take part. Children are confident and develop good self-esteem. They are gaining independence, for example, as they access the toilet when they need or get a drink.

Most children speak clearly and all communicate well. They learn letter sounds and some are writing good letter shapes. The staff encourage children to write their own name, as they label their models to show their parents. Children gain a very positive interest in books through the enthusiastic reading of stories by staff. They learn that books have titles and want to know who wrote the story. They count confidently and some recognise numerals under ten, with ease. They learn about weighing and measuring through activities. For example, getting the scales to balance as they use the compare bears. Some children are aware that the smaller bears will weigh less.

Children use the computer well, most have good mouse control and enjoy completing a fun, educational exercise with a friend. They gain a sense of time as they plant bulbs or learn about the life cycle of the butterfly. Children explore some different textures. They look at colour changes using bags of shaving foam or play with coloured rice. They have regular opportunities for free painting. Their imagination is supported with the well-resourced role play area and home corner. They sing well and enjoy using the musical instruments. They express themselves creatively as they make models or during music and movement sessions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual care needs are noted, respected and met. There are various resources that provide positive images of other cultures and disability. This helps children gain an awareness of the wider world. Some children benefit from learning French and enjoy showing what they have learnt at home. The nursery have a trained special educational needs coordinator (senco) who helps guide staff in caring with the children who need additional support as they learn.

Behaviour management is excellent. Children are very well behaved and respond positively to staff requests. They willingly help tidy up with the staff and are keen to hand the snacks out. Some children are able to relay some of the nursery rules, during registration time. They share popular resources and negotiate with other children as they play. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Positive relationships develop with parents. They are welcomed into the nursery to settle their child and are aware of who their child's key worker is. The prospectus gives some detail about the nursery and displayed staff photos ensure parents know whom they are talking to. They are aware that there are policies and procedures that give some detail about the nursery practices. This includes information about the complaints process and child protection.

The termly meetings between key workers and parents help ensure they are aware of the progress their child is making. Targets are set at these meetings, relating to children's individual needs. This enables parents to support their child's learning at home. The partnership with parents of nursery education children is good.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The clear recruitment process helps ensure the suitability of staff. The induction process enables new staff gain an awareness of how the nursery runs. On going support is in place through annual appraisals. There is a good ratio of qualified staff who are encouraged to undertake further training. This assists their personal professional development.

The mandatory policies and procedures are in place, although the non-collection of children process is not very clear. All necessary records are well maintained. The day is well organised and children benefit from the excellent adult support they receive.

Leadership and management is good. The manager and staff have a strong commitment to the children, integrating care and learning well. The manager monitors and evaluates the planning to ensure that children are supported in making progress. The staff work very well as a team with effective communication. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspections, for care and nursery education, the nursery were asked to ensure that there is an appropriate range of visual displays and resources that promote positive images of disability. Good progress has been made and there is a good selection of resources in place. These are used well in children's play. This helps children gain a positive awareness of the wider community.

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):

- look to provide warm running water in the toilet wash basins for effective hand washing
- consider ways that encourage children to participate in the planning of the day and activities
- ensure that the procedure for the non-collection of children is clear

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):

- consider ways to ensure children's progress towards all of the early learning goals, with clear reference to the stepping stones, is noted and shared with parents, to provide an accurate record of where children are in their learning

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