

The Avenues Playpen Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	510006
Inspection date	26 November 2007
Inspector	Margaret Bryant

Setting Address	The Avenues Playpen Pre School, 270A Victoria Avenue, Princes Avenue, Hull, East Yorkshire, HU5 3DZ
Telephone number	01482 493306
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Registered person	Pat Tweddell
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 Avenues Playpen Pre-School has been registered since 1994. It is a privately owned facility and is one of two groups owned by the proprietor. Avenues Playpen is based in self-contained premises in the west of Hull, some three miles from the city centre. The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 30 children from two years to under eight years. Currently there is a total of 37 children on roll, 24 of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. The group also care for children who speak English as a secondary language.

The pre-school has full day care registration and offers a breakfast club and a holiday club. It opens from 8.00 to 16.00 during term times and some holidays, according to demand. Children are cared for in a hall and a small connecting room, with supervised access by staff to enclosed outdoor areas. Children also go on occasional, local walks within the immediate neighbourhood.

There is a total of eight staff, including the proprietor, who is also the manager. Over 80% of staff who work with children, hold appropriate childcare qualifications. There are ancillary staff employed including a cleaner who comes into the group on weekends, when no children are

present. The pre-school have built links with early years and support teachers, as well as links with other professionals involved in the care and support of children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted quite well. Staff carefully check the setting before children arrive and make sure all areas are safe and clean for children, including the resources they play with. This means that attention to cleanliness does not take staff away from caring for children. Most children are aware of good hygiene practices, such as washing their hands after the toilet and before they eat. Some younger children require help with hygiene and nappies are changed by staff as required, to help children be comfortable. Most children independently access the toilets as and when they need to. Staff monitor this from a distance however, the layout of the toilets does not allow for total privacy for children if more than two children are visiting them at any one time.

Children freely access healthy snacks and either milk or water to drink whenever they wish. Even the youngest of children attempt to pour their own drinks quite well, assisted by jugs which are appropriate for this purpose and they reduce spillages. Staff are careful to ensure any food which is provided, is in line with individual dietary requirements and what children enjoy. Children help themselves to fruit, salad items and raw vegetables from communal bowls, into which they all put their fingers. This system does not appropriately safeguard children's health from the possible risk of cross contamination.

There are many opportunities for children to enjoy physical play and exercise. Children move with pleasure and confidence as they ride their bikes, pressing the peddles really hard to take them up slight inclines when outdoors. They are helped to develop their skills of coordination and judge their body space quite well. They try not to bump into one another as they run around and dance. Children are also helped to develop skills of catching and throwing, as they play games together with staff. They learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies and about how their hearts beat faster and slower as they play and rest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children show a strong exploratory impulse as they happily arrive at the pre-school. They eagerly take off their coats, change their outdoor shoes and run off to play with their friends. Space is well organised and the environment is warm and welcoming for children, parents and staff alike. Staff take positive steps to promote safety within the setting and carefully organise play areas to minimise risks. Times of arrival and departure of children are carefully monitored by staff. They secure external doors shortly after most expected children and their parents have arrived. Anyone late in arriving has to ring the bell. Anyone visiting who is not known to staff, are not allowed to collect children without prior authorisation from parents. This ensures children's utmost safety from unwanted visitors.

Children take part in fire drills and have discussions with staff about how to keep safe in an emergency. Older children demonstrate their knowledge, as they report when the whistle is blown they have to get outside quickly. Children also learn about road safety. Crossing patrol personnel visit the group to talk to children as well as staff. Children learn about how to keep

safe, particularly when near roads and are shown how to cross roads carefully and they observe crossing indicators. Staff closely supervise children when playing outside, although they allow children to take some risks in order to learn. For example, they have equipment on which to climb, including tree stumps and logs, on which to develop their skills of balance.

All staff attend mandatory training in child protection. They show knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and their policy is written in line with their guidance. The policy is very detailed and provides information about the possible signs and symptoms of harm. It also includes the procedure to be followed if allegations of abuse are made against staff members. Through attendance of regular training and a designated person with overall responsibility for child protection in the group, children are appropriately safeguarded and protected from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children receive good care. They are cared for in a warm, secure environment by friendly and approachable staff, who provide them with a wide range of opportunities. There is a balance of interesting and stimulating activities, both indoors and outdoors for active play and relaxation. All children's self esteem is promoted, as staff interact with them in sensitive and appropriate ways to meet their needs.

All children are encouraged to express their creativity through listening to music. They join in with favourite songs, respond with body movement and show an interest in how musical instruments sound. There is a wide range of different instruments, which children learn to play loudly as well as quietly. They also sing together in small groups. For example, some children develop attachments to others and they form firm friendships. They hold one another's hands and go from one activity to another together. They decide to face one another, holding hands and they sing a favourite nursery rhyme to the rest of the group quite loudly. They laugh together as they do the actions as they sing.

Most children under three years play well alongside the older children. Staff provide careful but unobtrusive observation, to ensure they all play harmoniously together. Some younger children who are less confident, find great comfort in the comfortable quiet corner. They feel safe as they relax on the comfortable furniture and read books with staff. The book corner is well stocked and accessed by all children. There are single seats and a settee for those children who wish to sit alongside one another and for staff to sit with children on a one to one basis. Planning for children under three years is carried out in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Planning is based around individual children and their skills and attitudes to learning. Written observations of children in their play, shared with parents, helps staff to plan for the next steps in learning. Photographs as well as work from all children are displayed throughout the pre-school. The bright and welcoming displays ensures parents are fully aware of what their children do. Children also feel proud to see their work on display.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the 'Curriculum guidance to the Foundation Stage' and about the areas of learning. Staff know individual children very well and use daily, written observations, to carefully plan on a weekly basis for their next steps of learning. They ensure each area of learning is considered every week. The planning identifies individual stepping stones, which consolidates learning and from which they can then help children progress further. Key persons for three and four year olds, ensure intended learning is appropriate. Focused observations clearly identify individual

children's next steps. However, not all observations recorded clearly show how this is used for future planning. Although each individual children's folder contains lots of notes, there are a few achievement records which are not completed. Therefore, children's progress through the stepping stones is not clearly evident.

Children very happily communicate with one another. Staff help and encourage them to think and ask questions as they play. This helps them find out about the world around them. Children listen well to familiar stories which they really enjoy. They are also helped to realise the importance of being quiet and listening to one another. Children show interest in the illustrations and excitedly join in conversation about the story when it is told. They are asked to recall what the story was about. This helps them to reflect on what they hear and also to recall how the story ended.

Children notice what staff do and imitate them, spontaneously, as they play with their friends. They attempt writing as a means of recording. For example, children ascribe meanings to marks as they complete their own registers. They look around to see who is present and 'tick' their record to indicate they are present. Children use the available props well to support their play. They dress up in brightly coloured costumes and engage in role play from first-hand experiences. For example, they get their handbags and go shopping, care for their dolls as if they were babies and with their party frocks on, go off to their parties. Children show care and concern for others and use their imaginations well. They show interest in what they hear when staff talk to some children about recent birthdays. Some children then decide to make birthday cakes from play dough. They decorate these with pretend candles and take them to their friend and unprompted by staff, sing 'Happy Birthday'.

Children are really encouraged to develop an interest in numbers and shapes. As they play, their vocabulary is extended through the introduction by staff of mathematical language. They help children learn about 'big' and 'little' and to compare two groups of objects. Strings of beads which children thread, are held up carefully to compare whose is the longest. Staff also help children to sustain concentration, using limited talk as they play games, which helps them develop knowledge of positional language. For example, staff ask them individually to pass the ball to a friend who is 'opposite', sitting 'in-between' or 'beside' another. Staff also help reinforce children's knowledge of colours and patterns. They do this by asking children to roll a ball to their friend with the 'brown' shoes, for example, who is sitting next to their other friend in the 'red striped' top.

There are many opportunities for children to recognise some familiar words, such as their names. Many children recognise their names, as they collect these as they enter the pre-school and place them on the board to indicate their presence. They also select their names when they choose to have their snack. Some children form recognisable letters, as they attempt to write their names on their pictures and paintings quite well. Outdoors they have opportunities to write, as they use chalk to draw and although slightly faded due to the weather, they park their cars in bays which are numbered. Children take notice of the world around them, as they watch new buildings be constructed and plant and nurture seeds which grow into plants, some of which they eat.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and feel valued as they are looked after by kind, attentive and caring staff. Staff encourage children to be aware of their feelings and discuss these, as they read stories

together. Staff help them to feel important as they constantly praise them in their play. They recognise their efforts in the work they produce and thank them for being nice to one another. Children make choices and decisions for themselves, which develops their sense of wellbeing. The youngest of children are supported well and in particular, those children who are new to the setting. Staff help them to feel safe and included. They find out about their individual needs and provide help when required with toileting. They also change nappies for those children not yet toilet trained. Children are helped to become aware of the wider society in which they live and to recognise and value differences in others. For example, visitors to the nursery, such as representatives for the 'hearing dogs for the deaf', increases children's awareness about diversity. Resources with which children play, also depicts positive images of diversity and race and shows people from different religious backgrounds.

Staff provide good role models for children in how to respect and to cooperate with others. The rules are on display, which some children helped devise. Children demonstrate a good knowledge of these, as they remember what the written information says quite well. Staff recognise some younger children still need guidance on how to share, for example, using distraction techniques well. They also use gentle explanation, to help children understand the effects of their behaviour on others. Staff work very well with parents, to ensure they provide the best care for children and in particular, those who have additional needs. Also they support those children who speak English as a secondary language. Staff also establish links with other relevant parties when this is required. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnerships with parents are good. Children benefit, as staff strive hard to ensure they have a trusting and mutually supportive partnership with them. There is a two-way flow of information, which begins before children formally commence at the setting. They hold meetings with parents, whilst their children find out what it is like in the setting, as they play with their new friends. Parents are introduced to all of the group's policies and procedures. Staff also explain to parents about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and about the areas of learning. Those parents whose children will receive nursery education funding, are consulted about what their children know and can do. However, this information is not formally recorded as a base for them to clearly identify children's starting points. Parents speak highly of the care their children receive and are invited once a term to discuss their children's progress. All parents know they can see their children's files whenever they wish. Useful and topical newsletters are sent out to parents. Daily discussions with them, as well as useful information on the notice board, helps parents to know about the care and education their children receive.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Organisation of the setting helps children to feel settled. This is because staff work hard to make sure children have a wide range of activities freely and readily accessible to them. Children show familiarity with the routines in place and feel secure, as they know what comes next. Staff are committed to their work with children, are well deployed and support all children in their play and learning. They work well together as a team and ensure children enjoy rich experiences and enjoy themselves. They each have individual responsibilities which they handle well. For example, designated staff are responsible for child protection, health and safety and behaviour management. Children's individual details as required by regulation, are stored securely but easily accessible, if required. Other documentation as required is available and is of a satisfactory standard. On some occasions, staff omit to obtain signatures from parents on documentation, such as medication records and registers do not clearly show staff hours of attendance.

Leadership and management are good. The manager has a close relationship with her staff. She knows they have a firm commitment to ensuring children receive good care and attention. She meets with them on a regular basis and oversees the work they plan, for those children who are in receipt of nursery education funding. The manager relies on her staff to help children achieve in their learning and to plan for their next steps of learning. She is a good leader in motivating staff. She promotes their professional development through ensuring they attend regular training, which benefits children. Parents are consulted about how their children are making progress and given opportunities to view their children's development files, most of which are completed on a regular basis.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection for care, the pre-school were asked to update policies and procedures, to ensure that they satisfy the requirements of the National Standards. This has been done and all policies and procedures are available to parents. This helps them know about the arrangements in place for the care of their children.

At the time of the last nursery education inspection, they were asked to attend to several areas. They needed to develop the assessment system to ensure it includes the next steps of learning; provide opportunities for more able children to read their names; provide opportunities to increase their understanding of numbers and seeing them as labels; provide opportunities for children to recognise changes to their bodies after being active and introduce a teaching system for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching practice.

Improvement has been made in the assessment system, although further improvement is required and is a recommendation of this inspection. However, children now have many opportunities to learn to recognise their names and their understanding of numbers through the daily programme. The environment is rich in numbers and children learn about what happens to their bodies after they exercise. Children's learning is enhanced by the attention given to the above matters.

Complaints since the last inspection

In May 2007, Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 1 - Suitable Person, National Standard 6 - Safety and National Standard 11 - Behaviour. An Ofsted inspector visited the provision on 15 May 2007. Actions were raised and satisfactorily met by the Registered Provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

In July 2007, Ofsted received concerns in relation to National Standard 1 - Suitable Person and National Standard 12 - Working in partnership with parents and carers. The Compliance, Investigation and Enforcement Team contacted the provision. The provision submitted an investigation response regarding the concerns raised. Ofsted is satisfied with the investigation response and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- improve record keeping to clearly show staff hours of attendance; ensure signatures from parents are obtained on all information shared with them about their children
- improve the serving of snacks to children to further minimise the risk from cross contamination; continue to review arrangements in toilet areas to make sure all children's rights to privacy are respected.

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):

- clearly show how written assessments of individual children are monitored and used to plan for the next steps in their learning
- expand on information provided by parents about children's starting points; ensure children's achievement records clearly show how they are making progress towards the early learning goals.

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