

Northleigh Ascension Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205292
Inspection date	21 January 2008
Inspector	Valerie Fane
Setting Address	Ascension Church Hall, Somers Park Avenue, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 1XA
Telephone number	01684 567220
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Registered person	Northleigh Ascension 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?

Northleigh Ascension Nursery is a committee-run group that has been running since the 1960's. It operates from a church hall in Malvern Link with access to an outside play area and a small garden in the church grounds. The nursery serves the local area.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 15:30 during school term time only. There are currently 41 children on roll. Of these, 34 children receive funding for nursery education.

Seven staff work with the children. Of these three have appropriate qualifications to Level 2 or above. At least half of the staff working with the children at any time are qualified. The nursery receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop their understanding of good hygiene because they have visits from a nurse who talks to them about the importance of keeping their hands clean and regular teeth cleaning. Children receive good care in the event of an accident or needing medication because all staff have current first aid knowledge. Staff keep accurate records of any accidents that occur or medication given and ensure that these are signed by parents. Children are not fully protected from risks of cross-infection. Children are excluded from the nursery when ill using infection control guidelines, but hand drying facilities in the toilets do not prevent the spread of infection because children use a communal hand towel.

Children gain some awareness of healthy eating habits because they have snacks of either a plain sweet biscuit or savoury biscuits. They bring their own lunch boxes but staff discuss the contents of the boxes with new parents and encourage all children to bring fruit as part of their lunch. At lunchtime children learn to eat the savoury items and the fruit first. Children extend their knowledge of healthy eating through topics. For example, they cut up and taste different types of fruit and staff encourage children to try less common types such as plums and figs. Craft activities include cutting out and sorting pictures of healthy and unhealthy food. Children are safeguarded with regard to food preparation and serving because staff have attended relevant food hygiene training and implement good practice.

Children learn about the importance of fresh air and exercise because they play outside twice a day in most weather conditions and do 'activate' exercises at the start of each session. This helps them understand how their bodies work. Children have limited outdoor activities in winter because of the lack of suitable facilities but they have recently gained use of a small garden area and this has increased the range of outdoor activities. Children improve their balance and control on a range of bikes and scooters. In summer they use balls and other small equipment on the grass area to develop a variety of skills. Indoors they climb over and through the small climbing frame and tunnel and have physical education sessions occasionally where they use balls, hoops and balancing equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children use premises that are suitable and are kept clean and well-maintained. The layout of the equipment is very attractive and welcoming. Staff put a lot of effort into converting a multi-user hall into a superb learning environment for children. They use a wide variety of posters and displays of children's work that have to be put up each morning and they set up equipment such as role play areas in a way that is inviting for children and is very well-resourced. As a result children and their parents come into a room that is welcoming and encourages children to settle easily. Children use a good range of high quality, well-maintained equipment that is kept clean and in good condition. They self-select from the range put out by staff each day.

Children's safety is compromised at the beginning of the morning session because occasionally there is no member of staff on duty by the door to ensure children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. In all other respects children are safe because staff maintain high standards of safety and security. Once all children are inside the door is locked and children's supervision is

good. When they play outside the gate is tied to ensure no children can leave the outside play area unaccompanied. Children learn to keep themselves safe. When playing outside they know that they must not go up or down the steps adjacent to the grass without a member of staff. Indoors they know that there must only be two children playing on the climbing frame at any one time to avoid them getting hurt.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow if they were to have concerns about a child in their care. The previous child protection co-ordinator has undertaken regular training and all staff are aware that they need to update their child protection knowledge by attending training in the near future. Children develop their awareness of their personal safety because staff talk to them about appropriate behaviour from adults using books to illustrate the issues. They help children to develop self-esteem as they encourage them to speak up for themselves if they do not like other children's behaviour.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children generally settle extremely well in the friendly atmosphere of the nursery and staff give good support to any children who need reassurance until they gain their confidence. Children of all ages form good relationships with staff and older children develop close friendships with their peers. A few children who are just below three years of age attend the group. These children make good progress because staff ensure that the planning links to appropriate elements of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and differentiate accordingly when the younger children are joining in with more structured activities. For example, when older children are investigating more complex 'odd one out' scenarios the younger children look at a set of plastic fish and identify the ones that are a different colour or that have stripes instead of spots. Children develop imaginative play using a variety of equipment. They enjoy role play in the home corner or they play with small world toys such as ocean creatures or a pirate ship.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All children make good progress towards the early learning goals. This is because staff have a firm knowledge of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and understand the breadth of learning that children gain from different activities such as investigating and tasting an orange. Children enjoy a diverse range of planned activities that covers all aspects of the six areas of learning and is linked to the stepping stones appropriate for their age and ability. The activity plans show clear learning intentions for children of different age or ability. This ensures children's individual needs are met. Staff are aware of children's starting points because they obtain information from parents using the parent page of the nursery profile in addition to their own observations. They continue to make detailed observations of children throughout their time in the nursery and identify their next steps in learning because they record what children can do as well as areas for development. Staff hold monthly meetings to discuss children's progress and to link the planning for the following month to their identified learning needs. Children behave extremely well and are enthusiastic learners because staff manage their time well and are fully involved in children's play and learning. Children make progress because staff interact with them and make good use of questioning to extend their learning.

Children take part with enthusiasm in a wide range of structured activities linked to a weekly story theme and the letter and number of the week. They listen well to group stories such as 'the three little pigs'. They take part in structured craft activities such as making a house for the pigs. They use tools such as paint brushes to paint the model brown and count out three windows to reinforce their understanding of the number three. They develop their awareness of simple calculation as they think about whether they need one more or one less if they have got the wrong number. They feel different textures as they stick straw, sticks and bricks on the house to represent the materials used by the pigs in the story. They develop language and creative skills through co-operative role play as they act out the story as a group. They explore emotions as they think about how the pigs would feel when the wolf could not blow down the house of bricks and how the wolf would also be feeling.

Children join in well with group activities that extend their learning. They look closely at an orange and extend their vocabulary as they learn that the skin is called peel. They know that it will feel cold because it has been in the fridge and use a variety of senses as they touch it and smell it. They learn the names of shapes as they talk about the shape of the orange. They make comparisons as they cut the orange open and find out whether the inside and outside smell the same. They develop their understanding of growing things as they discuss what would happen if they plant the pips in the garden. They squeeze the orange and enjoy tasting the juice and the segments of orange.

Children enjoy a weekly structured craft activity and these are planned to introduce children to a wide range of media. The activities are adult-directed but children have some opportunity to express their own ideas. However, they have limited opportunities to experiment freely with a wide range of creative materials, explore their different textures and use their imagination to produce their own creative ideas.

Children extend their learning through an interesting variety of structured literacy, mathematical and scientific activities. They develop their ability to spot differences or identify the odd one out. They use a computer with confidence to support their learning. They use a program that asks them to identify differences on two almost identical pictures. Children are challenged because the program offers a range of difficulty levels and staff encourage more able children to complete the higher levels. Children look closely at pictures of fish and try to identify the odd one out. Younger children practise counting by putting counters on dots on a set of fish and counting how many dots are on each fish. More able children recognise the numerals on a set of fish and try to put out the right number of counters. At circle time children talk about the letter of the week and develop their awareness of initial sounds as they name pictures that begin with the letter. They learn a song about the letter from a music tape. They enjoy related activities that also develop their learning in other curriculum areas such as knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, when learning the letter 'f' they use the water tray to find out which objects will float. More able children try to predict the outcome for their object and are able to say that some object have sunk.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They develop their individuality and self-esteem because they form relationships with others and they confidently share things they have brought from home at circle time. Older children develop confidence as they help younger ones, or do jobs for staff. Children improve their understanding of our wider society as they play with toys such as dolls and books that reflect other cultures. They

see posters around the room with labels written in other languages such as French. They discover other cultures and religions through topics where they look at food and costumes from other countries and by celebrating different festivals. For example, at Chinese New Year they talk about the festival at circle time and make dragons as a craft activity.

Children behave extremely well. Staff are excellent role models and have high expectations of children's behaviour and children respond very positively. Staff are calm and quietly remind children of the boundaries for their behaviour on the rare occasions that challenging behaviour does occur. Children share toys well, take turns and are polite and helpful. They understand rules such as the limit on the number of children using each set of equipment and willingly wait their turn when reminded by staff. If staff have concerns about a child's behaviour they discuss the issues with parents and work with them.

Children thrive because staff have a very good relationship with their parents. Parents receive a detailed brochure about the nursery that includes the policies. Current information is posted on the board in the entrance area because staff have found this to be more effective than sending home newsletters. Children's ongoing care needs are met because staff and parents exchange information regularly when children are collected. Children are protected because parents are made aware of how to make a complaint to the regulator and a log would be kept if any complaints were to be made.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents receive detailed information about the six areas of learning because this is included in the nursery brochure. Further illustrated information is available in folders in the entrance area. Parents are aware of children's progress because they have regular access to the observation books and can take them home to read overnight if they wish and children have a written report once a year. Children's links between home and school are fostered because parents help children to bring in items from home that are linked to the current theme to share at circle time. Parents are aware of topics because the planning is displayed on the notice board along with photographs of children enjoying the previous week's activities. This enables children to continue their learning at home.

Effective procedures are in place to identify children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their needs are met because staff discuss concerns with parents and encourage them to seek help from outside agencies.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children flourish in the generally well-organised nursery environment and benefit greatly from the experience and expertise of the excellent team of staff who work with them. Staff ratios are maintained or exceeded at all times and three of the four staff who work for the majority of the week with the children are qualified, with the remaining staff working part-time or providing lunch cover. Children's welfare is potentially compromised because the management committee has not ensured that changes in committee members are notified to Ofsted at the earliest opportunity. However, the manager is fully aware of other changes and events that must be notified to Ofsted. In other respects children's welfare is safeguarded because all adults have undergone checks with the Criminal Records Bureau and new staff receive induction that ensures that they are familiar with the policies and procedures. All of the required documentation that contributes to children's health, safety and welfare is in place and there are effective

procedures to ensure that it is regularly reviewed and updated. Parents also provide all necessary information and consents before their child attends the group.

Leadership and management of the funded children is good. Children thrive because the manager has a clear vision for the nursery education to prepare them for school and help them to become independent learners with good self-esteem and high levels of confidence. She works closely with her dedicated team of experienced staff to provide high quality provision for the children in their care. The manager provides clear leadership but also involves other members of the team in the planning and supports new staff to take on additional responsibilities when they are ready. She enables staff to attend training to support their professional development and improve the quality of their provision. Although there is no formal detailed self-evaluation process in place the manager has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and looks for different ways to address areas identified for improvement. The management committee maintain an oversight of the provision because one member of the committee visits from time to time and the manager provides a report at each committee meeting.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was recommended to display the fire evacuation plan, develop risk assessments for the nursery and to expand the uncollected child policy. The point for consideration for the nursery education was to improve the procedures for recording children's progress and sharing the information with parents.

Children's safety has improved because detailed risk assessments are in place and reviewed annually, the uncollected child procedure includes the necessary detail and is made available to parents and the fire evacuation plan is clearly displayed on the notice board in the nursery. Children's progress and learning is recorded through regular observations in individual record books and parents take regular opportunities to see the records.

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.

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 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 the safety of children during the arrival time at the start of the morning
- improve awareness of the need to notify Ofsted at the earliest opportunity of changes in the management committee
- take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection by improving arrangements for children to dry their hands after using the toilet.

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):

- improve opportunities for children to experiment freely with a wide range of creative materials.

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