

Albany Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY291689
Inspection date	12 November 2007
Inspector	Saida Cummings
Setting Address	United Reform Church Hall, Albany Terrace, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR1 3DU
Telephone number	01905 25889
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Registered person	Wishing Well Nurseries Ltd
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?

Albany Nursery School is one of five privately owned daycare settings. The nursery opened in 2004 and operates from a church hall situated close to Worcester city centre. Children are mainly cared for in a large hall, which is divided by a wooden partition at times when planned activities are carried out with different age groups. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting mainly serves children from the north side of the city, but is open to families from all areas. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time. Children from the age of two to 11 years of age attend the setting. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:30 to 18:00 during school term-time. The setting also offers after school care from 15:00 to 18:00.

There are currently 53 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 42 children receive funding for early education. There are a further 29 children from four years to under eight years on roll who attend the out of school club. The setting offers support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are very well nourished and enjoy a varied and interesting diet. They bring their own packed lunches and are provided with nutritious and healthy snacks and drinks for the remainder of the day. Parents and carers are made aware of the types of food to supply for their children to ensure they receive a healthy balanced diet. All children enjoy a varied menu of cooked and uncooked snack tea foods during the afternoon out of school sessions. They have access to drinks throughout the day as they are able to help themselves from jugs of fresh drinking water which are placed within their easy access. Children enjoy well-organised snack and mealtimes where they sit in small groups and use these opportunities to build on their socialising skills. Their independence is encouraged during these times as they are able to attempt doing everything for themselves, such as taking off their food wrappers and washing up their own spoon after eating yoghurt.

Children are beginning to develop self-care skills during daily hygiene routines including washing their hands after outdoor play, toileting and before meals. Older children are able to independently visit the toilets and staff gently remind them to wash their hands. There are appropriate procedures in place for dealing with any accidents, administering medication if requested and initially gathering information from parents and carers concerning individual children's health needs. The risk of infection to children is reduced as parents and carers are made aware of the guidelines followed and children are not cared for if they have an infectious illness. Children are building up their independence through daily routines, such as putting on and taking off their own coats and helping to tidy up.

Children are learning to gain control of their bodies and move confidently around the setting. They take part in planned and spontaneous indoor physical activities to help use different parts of their bodies, such as taking part in action rhymes. Children benefit from the many opportunities for daily fresh air and exercise. They are able to develop their physical skills on a regular basis as outdoor play is timetabled into each session. They understand the importance of exercise as they take part in warm-up gymnastic sessions at the beginning of outdoor play sessions. They readily join in with exercises, such as jogging on the spot, making star jumps and stretching up high. Staff emphasise the importance of warming-up and children explain they need to make their bodies warm and stretch their muscles. Children confidently use a variety of play equipment to help them develop their physical skills, such as balancing, jumping in and out of hoops and pedalling on various wheeled toys. Their physical development and confidence is further developed as they have the opportunity to take part in weekly swimming lessons. Staff encourage children's confidence in water as a chart is kept to acknowledge their achievements, such as ducking under water, floating on top of water and gaining confidence in the water.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are able to develop their confidence in a very safe environment as the indoor furniture and equipment are set out to enable them to move freely and safely. They are also kept safe when using the outdoor play area as this is sectioned off and they are made aware of the safety rules through appropriate discussions. They are taught not to run indoors, not to climb onto chairs and how to safely use the outdoor play equipment. Staff take time to explain to children the reasons why they need to follow the safety rules to ensure they are made aware of how to keep themselves safe. Children are kept safe during swimming activities as a full risk assessment is in place which is observed by all staff. The local low-level teaching pool is used and a high adult to child ratio is maintained, with the adult in the water closely supervising the small group of children they are responsible for. The setting reserve the use of the teaching pool for weekly sessions which also includes exclusive use of the allocated changing rooms. Staff hold appropriate discussions with children to make sure they are fully aware of water safety. Children's safety is assured through the vigilance of conscientious staff, who complete daily visual checks and comprehensive regular risk assessments to identify and reduce risks to children.

Children actively contribute in developing an awareness of their own safety. For example, they learn about road safety when they go out for walks around the local community. The school-aged children are made aware of the safe procedures to follow when being collected from school. Staff follow rigorous procedures during these times to ensure all children are kept safe and accounted for. There are very good emergency evacuation procedures which are regularly discussed and practised with the children. All policies and procedures are consistently applied by diligent staff in regard to supporting children's safety and welfare.

Children are kept very safe as staff follow rigorous procedures when they are dropped off and collected. Staff are deployed effectively and are very vigilant during these times to ensure all children are accounted for. Children's welfare is very well promoted by a team of staff who have a good and clear understanding of the issues surrounding child protection. Procedures for reporting concerns are implemented consistently by the management team and most of the staff complete training in identifying possible signs of abuse. All the staff are aware of the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines and the procedures to follow should they have any concerns. The child protection policy is shared with the parents and carers to ensure they are made aware of the staff's responsibility as child carers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and are building up their self-esteem. They benefit from a stimulating and exciting care and learning environment where they make very good developmental progress. Adults organise the resources and equipment which enables children to engage in meaningful and purposeful play. Planned activities are adapted accordingly depending on children's abilities and stages of development. Staff know the children very well and plan specific activities for individual children to ensure they are able to move on to the next stage in their development. Children socialise well, are busy and engage in purposeful and meaningful activities throughout the sessions. They are given time to concentrate and complete their chosen tasks.

Younger children's needs are very well met as staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to adapt the planned activities which ensures this age group have many opportunities to develop and build on their knowledge and skills. Stimulating activities are planned and adapted to

ensure all children are able to join in at their own level. Staff use observations and information gathered from parents and carers to assess individual children's abilities and stages of development. This information is effectively used to ensure the planned activities allow for individual children's abilities, which enables them to progress and to be sufficiently challenged. School-aged children are able to instigate all the activities they wish to take part in. Staff take time to find out each child's interest and ensure appropriate activities and play equipment are made available during the times they attend. Children feel very much 'at home' when they arrive back from school and are given time to relax whilst they enjoy a sociable tea time. They are happy, settled and enjoy using the various areas and stimulating resources to instigate all their own fun and physical activities. For example, during their walk back from school they stop to collect the various fallen leaves and then use these to make colourful collages and pictures when they return to the setting.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are curious and inquisitive, and staff encourage them to think for themselves and to develop their skills. Adults consistently and positively interact with the children to encourage their interest, involvement and learning. There are effective systems in place for initially establishing children's developmental starting points. Staff involve the parents and carers in this process as they are requested to contribute to the initial individual children's assessments using the local authority profile forms. This information is effectively used to incorporate appropriate activities into the setting's planning to ensure all children are able to move on to the next stage. There are systems in place for observing, monitoring and recording children's achievements. Staff set achievable targets for each child to progress or to challenge them in specific skills. The planned activities are effectively evaluated to ensure children's learning objectives are met and staff skilfully use this information to adapt or extend further planned activities. Children's behaviour is managed very well as staff hold appropriate discussions to encourage them to play safely, think about their actions and to be kind to one another. As a result, children are generally well behaved which enables them to progress as there is a positive learning environment. Staff plan interesting activities and make very good use of the available resources to motivate children and to help them try new and different experiences.

Overall children make good progress in all areas of learning. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very well fostered because of staff's knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and progress. Children are able to instigate some of their own play activities and also choose from the various planned activities set up by the adults. However, children's ability to make free choices is limited as free play sessions within the weekly activities are not consistently planned. Although children are able to request other play equipment and activities, the resources set up are usually limited to the items chosen by the adults. Children enjoy an interesting range of well-resourced creative activities. They are able to create their own paintings and drawings as they have various opportunities to take part in art and craft activities. For example, they enjoy mixing different paint colours using powder paint and water. They then use string to dip into their pots of paint which they use to create effective string paintings, such as manipulating the paint-filled string on paper plates to make 'Mr. Messy' pictures. They take pride in their creations which are colourfully displayed throughout the setting. Children enthusiastically join in with various musical sessions, enjoying singing, dancing and using the musical instruments. Physical development for children is very well fostered. They handle small equipment, such as scissors, glue sticks and paint brushes, with confidence. They have opportunities to develop their hand to eye co-ordination during planned activities, such as cutting, sticking, crayoning and manipulating Play-Doh.

Children are good at communicating and are developing their language and literacy skills. They enjoy stories and staff give good explanations when they ask questions about the different characters and parts of the stories. Their love for books is further extended by the book lending service which encourages children to choose books to take home which they share with their parents or carers. Children see a wealth of labels and posters to help them understand the importance of the written word. They have opportunities for writing during specific planned activities and as part of their everyday play. Staff ensure various writing materials are made available at all times to encourage children to develop their writing skills. Children's problem solving, reasoning and numeracy is good. They have opportunities to use numeracy during planned activities and as part of their everyday routines, for instance, they count the number of children present during registration time. They use mathematical language during everyday routines, such as during lunch-time they recognise some of their sandwiches are cut into squares and some are cut into triangles. Children have regular opportunities to investigate, explore and use their senses. They take part in planned activities to find out how things work. An example of this is when they enthusiastically join in with the 'melting ice' activity. Staff ask appropriate questions for children to think about why the ice is melting, how the little plastic animals got inside the ice and what they need to do to get them out. They hold the ice and experience how cold it is and what how wet it feels as it melts and the water drips through their fingers. Children have opportunities to use information and communication technology as part of their everyday play. They confidently manipulate the mouse whilst playing fun and appropriate computer games and enjoy using the play telephones and tills during imaginative play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to be involved and staff ensure all children are included. There is an effective equal opportunities policy in place which is implemented by all staff. There are very good procedures in place for caring for any children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Staff show a very good awareness of how to ensure children's individual specific needs are met. They work alongside outside agencies to ensure individual care or educational plans are implemented to help all children reach their full potential. There is also an effective procedure for working with any children who speak English as an additional language. Any children with a specific need are included in the life of the nursery as any specific activities are incorporated into the daily sessions and routines.

Children have access to a good range of resources to promote their awareness of diversity and take part in several planned activities to help them understand their own and other cultures and beliefs, such as taking part in fun Christmas and Chinese New Year activities. Children know what is expected of them and are starting to understand right from wrong. They are able to follow adults' instruction and hold discussions concerning safety rules and behaviour. They work and play well together, taking turns and sharing. Staff are good role models for the children and encourage them to be polite and to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Any behavioural issues are dealt with appropriately and sensitively. Staff praise and encourage children's positive behaviour and ensure there is a consistent approach. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Staff are very aware of the importance of involving parents and carers in the life of the nursery and their children's development. They establish a very good relationship with parents and carers which contributes significantly to children's well-being in the nursery. The parents and carers are provided with very good quality information about the setting, which includes information about nursery

education and how children work through the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are kept very well informed of what their children do and their achievements through daily discussions, which include any domestic routines and the activities their children have enjoyed taking part in. Staff initially seek information from parents and carers concerning their children's starting points and their stages of development and use this information to plan appropriate activities for individual children. Staff also take pictures of individual children during activities and everyday routines which are shared with the parents and carers to enable them to see how their children spend some of their day. There are links between home and the setting to extend and involve parents and carers in their children's learning and experiences. This includes the book lending scheme and staff requesting parents' and carers' input into topical work.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The premises are organised to ensure children are cared for in child-friendly surroundings where they are able to choose activities they wish to take part in. Children enter an environment that is highly stimulating and motivates all aspects of their development. However, the organisation of the free-choice activities are limited and does not ensure children have sufficient opportunities to instigate their own play so there is a balance between adult-led and child-led activities. The management and staff work extremely well together to ensure the organisation and procedures are regularly reviewed, with improvements made as required. The service is regularly reviewed as parents' and carers' views and suggestions are taken on board and whenever possible, changes are made to accommodate any requests. The effective policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety and well-being. There are many detailed documents in place. These are regularly reviewed and updated, taking into consideration current legislation affecting the care of children.

Appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures are in place, which ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Parents and carers are supplied with very good quality information about the organisation of the setting and how the children are cared for. They are kept fully informed of the setting's events through regular newsletters and notices. There are effective and very good systems in place for keeping the required records. Children's care is enhanced because of the expertise of staff and the good quality organisation. They aim extremely high and never stop in their focus to provide the best care. There is a strong commitment to training from the management and staff attend ongoing suitable courses and information sessions. There is a robust system in place for the ongoing appraisal of staff. The key worker system is effective and the staff get to know the children extremely well.

Leadership and management for nursery education are good. Management and staff are very keen, enthusiastic and have clear roles and responsibilities. The provider and nursery manager have clear aims for the setting and are committed to evolving and developing the provision. The effectiveness of activity planning for children is very good. Staff are committed in improving their knowledge and understanding and enjoy attending various training events. Children benefit from staff's development as new procedures or good practice is implemented into the care provided. Staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum is very good and they are aware of how young children learn and incorporate this into the sessions. They use effective questioning and ensure they supervise the children without inhibiting their ideas and imagination. The provider and staff are committed to providing a very high standard of care and education for the children. 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 provider agreed to: improve drinking facilities for children; ensure the fire safety recommendations are completed and develop the special needs policy.

Children now have access to drinking water at all times. They are able to help themselves from jugs of fresh drinking water which are made available on low-level tables situated in the area they use.

All the recommendations made by the fire safety officer have been satisfactorily completed. This includes emergency lighting, appropriate emergency exit signs and an appropriate lock fitted to the front door. The provider and staff carry out regular fire risk assessments and the electrical equipment is tested annually.

The written special needs policy has been developed and now reflects the latest legislation. All staff, parents and carers are made aware of this policy which enables all relevant parties to work together to ensure the needs of any children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully met.

As a result of these improvements children's health, safety and well-being is assured.

Complaints since the last inspection

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents and carers, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 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):

- review the organisation to ensure children are given sufficient opportunities to make free choices and to instigate their own play (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the Care section above.

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