

Alconbury Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY251575
Inspection date	23 November 2007
Inspector	Denise May Smith
Setting Address	The Memorial Hall, School Lane, Alconbury, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4EQ
Telephone number	07989105724
E-mail	d4wleys@yahoo.co.uk
Registered person	The Trustees of Alconbury Community Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Alconbury Community Pre-School opened in 1980. It operates from The Memorial Hall, School Lane, Alconbury, Cambridgeshire and serves the local catchment area and surrounding villages.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open from 09.30 to 11.30 on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and from 12.30 to 15.00 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school employs five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a further qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted well. Children learn to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet, which is effectively monitored by staff. They use liquid soap and individual paper towels to ensure there is no risk of cross-infection. Children are routinely encouraged to wash their hands before helping staff to prepare the snack. Staff ensure tables are wiped prior to snack time using an anti-bacterial spray to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. Children are further protected from the risk of infection as sick children do not attend and any minor injuries are appropriately treated by trained staff. Children's accidents and medication needs are all well recorded. However, some of the accident records are not countersigned by parents and the consent obtained from parents enabling emergency medical advice or treatment to be taken is not written in line with the National Standards and therefore, does not underpin the care provided.

Children benefit from eating the variety of fresh fruit available at snack time, such as bananas, tomatoes and apples. They enjoy using a straw to drink their carton of milk; water is also available if preferred at snack time. Children are able to help themselves to water from the jug and cups which are set out for them during the session should they become thirsty. Children's dietary needs are known by staff to ensure their individual needs are met.

Children have daily opportunities to play outside in the fresh air. They enjoy a variety of activities, such as running, playing with balls and hoops and ride the many bikes and trikes available. Children benefit from the weekly dance class provided by one of the children's parents. They warm up, move and coordinate themselves to music and thoroughly enjoy this group activity. Staff also join in with the children as they play group ring games further promoting physical exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a well-organised environment where they have space to enjoy a range of activities both inside and outdoors. Children benefit from the clean, bright environment where the displays of children's work make the premises inviting to both parents and children. Children access toys independently from the range of low-level storage units enabling them to make choices in their play. Staff ensure they rotate toys from the upstairs storage room to make sure toys and activities remain interesting and fresh for the children.

Children's safety is given priority by conscientious staff who show a good knowledge and understanding of reducing risks to children by identifying potential hazards and taking appropriate action to reduce these. For example, daily risks assessments and checks are made prior to children arriving to ensure the premises are safe. Staff deploy themselves around the outdoor area to ensure children can always be seen, are supervised and are safe. Children are secure within the premises as the main door is kept locked after parents leave. Children are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures as they practise these with the staff. Staff have made a story book using photographs of the children playing, stopping and leaving the building which makes these fire practices more meaningful to the children. Children learn about taking responsibility for their own safety through the staff's reminders on potential hazards,

which benefit their understanding such as not to walk around with a straw in their mouths in case they fall.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as the staff team has a good knowledge and understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care. A comprehensive safeguarding children policy is available to support staff if necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and confident in their environment. They mostly, happily leave their parents and quickly settle down to their activities. Any children who are not so settled are given extra support until they are happy to go and play with their friends. Children know the routines and are very comfortable about choosing what they want to do from some prepared activities and from the many resources within their reach, consequently, children's interest is maintained well. Children's development is actively promoted through the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress in their early education because staff are trained and experienced workers who have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff are confident in assessing children's achievements and use these assessments to collate the next steps of learning for their key children. These collective next steps are used by the supervisor to inform the following weeks planning. However, it is not recorded on the planning which children, in particular, the activities are aimed at so it is less effective in enabling staff to support the children. The planning is broad and balanced and key activity plans are devised to support staff focus on a particular area. However, these are stored behind the daily plans so they are not visible for staff to use effectively.

Children are confident, motivated and show good levels of self-esteem. They demonstrate a positive attitude to learning as they eagerly join in the activities. Children take turns and readily share the resources. For example, two children join together to complete a program on the interactive whiteboard. Children are confident and able speakers; they have good language skills and are able to make themselves and their needs understood. Children enjoy story time and join in with the familiar lines of the group stories. They are developing early writing skills and they confidently mark make across all activities. Children recognise their name cards as they self-register when they arrive at the group and when sitting down for their snack.

Children are developing a secure understanding of mathematical concepts. Some children can count to at least ten and some can count beyond this. Number concepts are introduced in many ways. For example, children count the number of milk cartons needed for snack time, play number games and sing number songs and rhymes. This is a fun introduction to early mathematics. Children have good opportunities to learn about their local community and the wider world. There are positive images of culture and disability displayed throughout the premises which helps to raise children's awareness of diversity. They learn about traditions and cultures relating to themselves and others. For example, celebrating Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter and also Diwali and Chinese New Year. Children show an interest in the natural world. They plant seeds such as grass and cress and regularly go on walks into the local

community such as nature walks to collect twigs for their bonfire picture. Children use technology confidently, freely using the interactive white board and following simple instruction to complete tasks.

Children have very good opportunities to develop their small muscle skills because they use a wide range of tools, pencils, paint brushes, scissors. These help to promote children's hand-eye coordination. Children enjoy taking part in music and movement sessions, which are led by a parent who is a dance teacher and they enjoy taking part in traditional ring games with the staff. These activities help to develop their coordination, sense of rhythm as well as providing the children with physical exercise.

Children have daily opportunities to play creatively. They take part in a wide range of art and craft activities and enjoy a variety of messy play experiences which make learning through play fun and interesting.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well known and met by caring, supportive staff. Children take part in activities to increase their awareness and understanding of differences and play with resources which reflect positive images of diversity, such as books, puzzles, play people and dolls. Although there are currently no children attending with learning difficulties or disabilities, staff have prior experience in meeting these children's individual needs.

Children behave well and are kind to each other, without prompting. For example, they help each other to carry boxes at tidy-up time and take turns with the toys waiting patiently for their turn at the more popular activities. Any unwelcomed behaviour is dealt with effectively and extra support is provided for children as necessary. Staff are consistently calm with the children. They comfort them when upset, get down to their level when speaking to them or helping them with an activity and laugh with them, helping them to feel settled and relaxed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from effective sharing of information between staff and parents. Staff greet the parents and children on arrival and promote a friendly, approachable environment. Parents have access to the group's policies and procedures and form the management committee of the group.

The partnership with the parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Good quality information is provided in relation to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning is displayed so that parents know what activities their children are taking part in and regular newsletters are sent home to further keep them informed. Parents volunteer to help during the sessions if they wish so that they can see first-hand the kind of activities their children are involved in. Staff talk to parents on a daily basis and encourage them to look at their children progress records and to contribute to their assessments of learning. Bi-annual consultation sessions are offered where parents have a specific opportunity to discuss their child's progress with their key worker.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and welfare is effectively promoted because the staff are able to competently put into practice the policies and procedures which underpin the provision. Children records contain most relevant information which is required to promote their care and learning and enable staff to meet children's individual needs. Documentation is stored confidentially but remains easily accessible should it be required. Children are cared for by experienced, qualified staff who continue to attend training and relevant workshops. This enables them to keep up-to-date with current practice and further develop their knowledge and skills. Staff take part in an effective appraisal system in place which ensures that all staff have a good awareness of the National Standards. The group is well managed and effectively supported by the committee and all staff, who are committed to improving the outcomes for children. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The setting has worked hard to ensure that the assessment of children's achievements are effectively used to inform the short term planning, making the activities interesting and relevant to the needs of the children attending. Staff are knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage and how children learn and use this knowledge to make the children's time at the group fun. The supervisor of the group is a good role model to her staff team and is very receptive to support and advice in order to improve the quality of the education provided.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the committee agreed to ensure that the contents of the first aid box is maintained and that the hand drying arrangements for staff maintain appropriate hygiene practices. The first aid box is now complete and up-to-date and suitable staff hand washing facilities are in place. The staff are now knowledgeable about child protection issues and documentation now includes the procedures to be followed in the event of a parent failing to collect a child. Accident records now contain sufficient supporting detail, but are not consistently countersigned by parents. This remains a recommendation from this inspection. The complaints procedure is now in place and accessible to parents. By acting on these recommendations the group have improved the quality of the care provided.

At the last nursery education inspection the committee agreed to continue to review and develop the planning and to further develop the use of assessments of children's achievements. The assessment systems are now effective in identifying children's next steps of learning and are used to directly influence the short term planning. Parents are now encouraged to contribute to their children's progress records. Children are now encouraged to be more independent in selecting activities and resources for themselves which gives them increased opportunities to develop their own, freely chosen, creative ideas. By acting on these recommendations the group have improved the quality of the education provided.

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):

- ensure that all accidents records are consistently countersigned by parents
- ensure that the consent from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment is written in line with the National Standards.

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 sure the children's identified next steps of learning are clearly marked on the planning so that staff can effectively support all children and ensure that all of the planning is visible to support staff in their work.

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