

Alton College Childcare Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110007
Inspection date	04 December 2007
Inspector	Carole Gronow
Setting Address	Old Odiham Road, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2LX
Telephone number	01420 86794 or 01420 592200
E-mail	pat.monaghan@college.ac.uk
Registered person	The Governing Body of Alton College
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Alton College Childcare Centre which is in its own purpose built building is situated in the grounds of Alton College. There are two rooms at the centre, the smallest of which is used for children to sleep. A maximum of 20 children may attend the centre at any one time which is open from 08:30 to 17:30 Monday to Friday during term time. It opens at other times by prior arrangement to suit the college timetable. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The parents of all the children who attend are either teachers or students at the college and the centre does not accept children from the community.

There are currently 26 children aged from six months to under five years on roll. Children all attend on a part time basis, for a variety of sessions and they bring their own lunches. The centre is not registered to claim the Nursery Education Grant. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language. Seven members of staff are employed to work with the children. Of these, four of them hold an appropriate early years qualification at Level 3 and two staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have daily opportunities to get fresh air whilst developing their levels of fitness because they play outside all year round. They have direct access to an all weather surface which is under cover and in good weather there is also on a grassed area for them to play on. They ride bikes, dig in sand pits and there are various play houses for them to play in. However, this healthy lifestyle is not supported at snack time because children are offered biscuits to eat and juice to drink. Children can ask for drinks at any time and in warm weather staff ensure that they offer children drinks more frequently so that their thirst is quenched and they remain hydrated. Children's individual dietary and cultural needs are well respected, these are asked about on the registration form and are then discussed in detail with parents or carers so that staff are fully informed.

Children are protected from the risk of illness by cross-infection through the appropriate procedures that are in place; staff use gloves when changing children and paper towels and soap are provided. Children are fully aware of when they have to wash their hands. They do so before eating and when they come in from outside and they go straight to the toilets with their hands out in front of them ready to do so. The exclusions policy ensures that children are not cared for when they are ill and parents and carers are informed that they will be called if children become ill. The centre has obtained all the necessary medical information about individual children, accidents are very clearly recorded and parents and carers are informed. However, if a child is hurt the setting has to, at times, rely on duty staff responsible for covering the entire college premises because currently, only one member of staff has an in date first aid certificate.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in premises that have been specifically designed for the purpose. All furniture and the toilets and wash basins are at child height as are a wide range of toys all of which helps encourage children's independence and enables them to make choices about what they want to play with. All identified potential hazards such as access to the kitchen area and low level glass have been addressed to ensure that children are safe. This means that children can move around the centre both freely and safely. Children are learning how to respond in an emergency because staff periodically carry out evacuation practices with them which are recorded and evaluated.

Children's security is given a very high priority. Entrance to the centre is through a lobby area where there is information for parents and carers to read. There is another door which leads into the main room which has to be opened from the inside. Parents and carers sign children in and out and a record is kept on the board to make sure this is accurate. This ensures that staff always monitor who is entering the premises and also that children are not able to leave unaccompanied. Good systems are in place for the collection of children; they can only be collected by people the staff already know or by others already named on the registration form and who know the pre-arranged password. Children are protected in areas of concern because staff understand their responsibility and they are aware of the signs and symptoms to look for. Most staff have recently attended training in this area to update their knowledge. However, the current child protection policy is not shared with parents and carers prior to their child's admission.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and very relaxed. They enjoy very good relationships with staff and they confidently approach them to ask for help, for example, to build a train track or even just to chat to them. Children are very familiar with the daily routines, for example, at tidy up time, when staff ask them, they happily stop what they are doing and help put things away. Children enjoy lots of conversations with staff and giggle happily, for instance, at snack and lunch time when they sit round the table together. Children learn to make choices as they are asked, and decide what they want to sing. Staff use situations like this to introduce and reinforce the meaning of new words which helps children to understand different concepts and as well as extending their vocabulary. For example, they talk about 'first' and 'last' and 'finish' and 'start' when they are trying to decide what to sing before they get to 'Jack in the Box' at the end. Children feel valued and special because staff know them well, they know what children enjoy doing and what their favourite songs are and they talk to them in detail, about their family.

Children's self-esteem is fostered by staff who ensure that they act as good roles models; they always use please and thank you when they are speaking to children and they give them lots of praise. Children enjoy a range of activities that encourages their creativity. They do bubble painting, splatter painting and make collages using materials such as tissue paper, egg boxes and flowers. Younger children make Christmas cards by hand printing. Older children become thoroughly engrossed as they spread glue all over a large painting of Father Christmas as well as on cut outs of Christmas decorations. Then, they make choices about what colour glitter to sprinkle all over and carefully cover all the glued areas. Children have fun dressing up, for instance, a nurse tries to make Spiderman's better because he has a poor tummy. They also enjoy books, they look at them alone and also they sit together on the settee and read to one another.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected. Their individual needs are promoted by staff who find out about them through discussion with parents and carers. For example, staff use some words of the language that children speak at home and then tell other children what the words are they are saying. Children learn about diversity through the range of resources that they play with. Children with learning difficulties and or disabilities will be appropriately supported. Staff obtain information from parents and carers and, with parental agreement, seek advice from any agencies involved. Children's behaviour is good. Children are learning to share because staff encourage them and then thank them when they do. All children are very polite and freely say thank you, for example when they are given their drinks and biscuits. Children are aware of boundaries that have been set and abide by them, for instance, if they want to go outside to play they get their coats to put on.

Children benefit from the very good, informal, relationship that staff have with their parents and carers. This is initiated at the onset of children attending because the setting welcomes children and their parent or carer to visit whenever they want and until children are ready to be left. This ensures that children settle well because they are already very familiar with the setting and the staff. Individual children, activities they have been involved in and any care issue are discussed daily both at arrival and collection and this contributes towards continuity in children's care. Parents and carers make written requests for medication to be administered and sign the accident book which ensures that they are aware of what has happened to their

child. However, they are not asked to give prior written consent for staff to be able to seek medical advice or treatment for children in the event of an emergency which means that any necessary treatment to a child may be delayed.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by a staff team who are well established who have worked together for a long time; their photos are on display so that parents and carers are aware of who is who. Good staff to child ratios ensure that children receive individual support and attention when it is needed. Suitable recruitment procedures and robust checks ensure that the staff employed are suitable to work with children. Children benefit by being cared for by staff who are committed to attending training in order to update their knowledge of and expertise in childcare.

Although there are written policies and procedures they have not been reviewed to ensure that they actually reflect what happens in the setting. Some, such as the child protection, complaints and special needs ones do not comply with current guidance. The majority of the documentation which is required to promote the welfare and the care of children is in place and most is available for inspection. However, medication records have not been kept for the minimum period of two years which is a breach of regulation.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the setting was given a recommendation to ensure all necessary detail is included in documentation. As some documentation still lacks detail, this is raised again in the recommendations following this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

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):

- obtain signed parental consents to be able to seek medical advice or treatment in the event of an emergency
- retain all documents relating to the administration of medicines for a minimum of two years
- ensure that sufficient staff update their first aid training so that there is always someone with a current certificate present
- regularly review policies to make sure that they accurately reflect practice. Ensure that they comply with legislation and current guidance, particularly with reference to complaints, special needs and child protection.

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