

Archway Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131663
Inspection date	25 January 2008
Inspector	Asia Islam
Setting Address	Vorley Road, Archway, London, N19 5HE
Telephone number	02075274827
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Registered person	London Borough of Islington
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Archway Children's Centre was registered in 2001 and is managed by the Early Years Department of Islington Council. It operates from purpose built premises, which are located in Archway in the London borough of Islington.

The day care provision is registered to care for a maximum of 76 children under five years. There are currently 77 children from one to five years on roll, this includes 29 children funded for nursery education. Children attend part time or full time sessions. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The operational hours are from 08.00 to 18.00 hours, 49 weeks a year. The out of school provision is registered to care for a maximum of 16 children from five to under eight years during the school holidays and operates from 08.00 to 18.00.

A total of twenty five staff work at the centre, this includes two teachers and the management team. The majority of staff hold relevant childcare and teaching qualifications.

The centre also offers a range of family support services, including a drop-in centre, toy library, health and exercise sessions, advice and training and information sessions for children's developmental needs.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and hygiene needs are promoted very well because staff remind children to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before meal times. The environment is maintained to an excellent standard of hygiene, this contributes to minimising any risk of cross infection. Babies' personal needs are very well catered for as their nappies are frequently changed. The majority of the staff hold valid first aid qualifications and they understand the necessary procedures to follow in the event of any accidents.

Children are provided with nutritional meals and snacks that support their healthy eating habits and that are cooked and prepared on the premises. Children enjoy lunch times and they are encouraged to help themselves from the serving dishes, promoting their independence. Discussions about the benefits of eating vegetables take place, this extends children's understanding of healthy eating. Drinking water is provided throughout the day for babies but it is not always available for the older children. This means their thirst needs are not fully met.

Children relish the outdoor play throughout the day. They have access to a wide range of play resources, including large climbing apparatus, balancing equipment, ball games, bikes and the textured part of the garden for walking and climbing. These offer children challenging outdoor play and fully support their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to premises that are very bright and welcoming and that are maintained to an excellent standard of decoration. Regular risk assessments are completed to minimise risks to children. However, the fire procedures are not displayed in all areas of the premises to support staff and visitors in the event of a fire. The children's attendance register does not include their arrival and departure details, this means there is a lack of accurate information available in the event of any fire or child protection concerns. The procedure to follow when a child is lost is not easily available, this means some staff are not fully aware of the actions to take in such an event. Children benefit from toys and equipment that are maintained to a good condition. The staff are aware of their responsibility to safeguard children's welfare and they are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. However, the procedures to follow in the event of any allegations against staff or volunteers are not easily available to ensure that the staff take appropriate actions.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very busy and happy in an environment that is extremely well equipped with resources to stimulate their all round development. They have excellent opportunities for expressing their thoughts and ideas through a wide range of art materials. The babies are very comfortable and settled with the staff members, who are warm and gentle towards them. They

sit down together on the carpet, sing songs and explore books and toys. A wide range of quality resources are available to support their sensory development and physical stability. Young children's activities are planned in accordance with the Birth to three matters framework. Children are confident and independent throughout the setting and they readily approach staff for support when needed. The staff team are close by to support and guide children and they readily engage in children's care and play. The excellent range of high quality resources and activities are within easy reach to enable children to initiate their own play. Children are acquiring first-hand experience of outdoor exploration and adventure in the secure outside play area, which is fully equipped to support their physical development and imaginative play. The toddlers take part in making bird food to hang outside in the trees, helping them to develop an awareness of the wild life and environment in the garden. Older children are currently working on a theme relating to transport to develop an understanding of the different forms of transport used by people.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making very good progress along the Foundation Stage because the staff provide them with an excellent range of activities for learning. The provision has an excellent system in place for observing and assessing children's progress, this is used consistently to plan for children's next steps in learning.

Children are keen and motivated explorers. They share and play well together and have developed good relationships with each other and the staff team. As a result, children are extremely well behaved and they eagerly respond to staff instruction and support. Children enjoy and look forward to the activities available. They show high levels of concentration to the activities. Children are very good listeners and take part in group discussions about flying, force and gravity. They are encouraged to compare birds to aeroplanes and to understand the issues relating to flying. Children comfortably engage in the literacy area and make meaningful marks to develop their early writing skills. They successfully recognise and write their first name. Children enjoy looking at books to make connections in their learning about transport. They make three dimensional models, for example, rockets and space suits using a variety of art materials. They walk up and down, climb and balance, ride and run with full confidence in the garden as this area is fully resourced to support their physical development and outdoor exploration. Children independently use the computers to play games and they understand the functions of a mouse. They count and learn about numbers, for instance, when they help staff to arrange tables for lunch time. Children are making very good progress in all areas of learning as the staff team effectively plan and support all areas of the Foundation Stage.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children have access to a wide range of resources reflecting positive images of diversity that extends their understanding of differences and similarities. Children visit museums and art galleries in order to gain an understanding about the wider community. An inclusive policy is in operation for working with children with learning difficulties and disabilities and for those children with English as a second language. The staff work together with the parents and professionals to effectively support children's needs. Staff have an excellent understanding of managing children's behaviour. Children are extremely well behaved and talk very nicely with each other and with the staff members. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. The partnership with parents is very strong. Many of the parents have expressed high praise about the staff's professional and friendly approach and about the services

offered by the setting. Information about children's progress and welfare is regularly shared with the parents. A complaints procedure is in place.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. Information about their activities and learning is regularly shared with parents both formally and informally. Detailed activity plans and information about the children's nursery education are displayed and their profiles and assessment records are shared with the parents. Their comment is actively sought and included in the planning. Children's initial entry forms clearly document individual needs and these are used as a base to build from and extend children's learning. Home reading and maths schemes are in place. Regular newsletters and parents' meetings ensure that the parents are made aware of the nursery education curriculum and how children spend time in the nursery. The setting welcomes parents to meet staff outside the programmed consultation meetings. As a result, the parents are able to fully participate in their children's learning and the children benefit greatly because they know their parents are actively involved in their education.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The setting is an established provision, where the staff team are very knowledgeable about children's developmental needs and they enable children to make excellent progress through both structured and free play. The setting provides a wealth of resources to help children make full use of the indoor and outdoor areas for their all-round development and learning. It is spacious, bright and clean for children's well-being and health. The staff ensure that the children are comfortable and happy because they value children's preferences and interest. Most of the required records for children's safety and welfare are in place. However, the setting is not aware of the requirements for children's attendance records as these do not include the necessary details, this means the setting is in breach of a regulation. The setting's policies and procedures are in place but some of these are not easily available for staff, parents and inspections.

The leadership and management of the funded children is outstanding. The staff team are clear about their roles and responsibilities to work together and to ensure children receive high quality nursery education. They use the National Curriculum Foundation Stage to observe, assess and plan children's next steps in learning to ensure that they make excellent progress. Regular appraisals, training and meetings are in place for the professional development of staff. The management team regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of the teaching to ensure the delivery of the Foundation Stage is consistently maintained to a very high standard.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to organise the outdoor play area to its full potential for both care and the nursery education. The setting has since developed the garden areas, which include a decking area in the baby section of the nursery, a willow structure, textured path, planting and meadow section to effectively support all areas of children's development and learning.

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.

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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):

- make sure drinking water is always available for children
- ensure that the relevant policies and procedures are easily available for staff, parents and for inspection purposes
- ensure children's attendance records include their daily arrival and departure times.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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