

Aylesbury Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	159946
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspector	Christine Jacqueline Davies

Setting Address	Taplow House, Dawes Street, London, SE17 2EB
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Telephone number	020 7703 6440
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E-mail

Registered person	London Borough of Southwark
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Full day care
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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 outstanding. 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?

Aylesbury Early Years Centre was registered in 1997 but has been in operation since 1972. It is a local authority owned setting situated in the Walworth area, in the London borough of Southwark. It operates from purpose built premises and has access to three group rooms and use of two outdoor spaces, and a small gardening area. The centre serves the local area and is open all year round, from 08:00 until 18:00, Monday to Friday. It is registered for a total of 53 children from six months to under five years. There are currently 40 children on roll. This includes 18 funded three and four year olds. The Centre currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are 12 members of staff, this includes the manager, deputy and childcare practitioners. All staff members have a recognised early years qualification. The centre receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health needs are promoted very well. This is due to highly effective policies and procedures, and very thorough hygiene routines which are implemented very rigorously by staff. Children have access to exceptionally clean facilities, equipment and resources, and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene, by ensuring that they wash their hands after playing in the garden or after using the toilet. Excellent recordkeeping regarding accidents and medication, and strong links with external agencies, ensures that children's health needs are appropriately supported. For example, the centre manager arranged for staff to receive appropriate training from the local health centre on how to use an Epi-Pen with children, enabling them to act appropriately should a medical emergency arise, as a result of a severe allergic reaction. In addition to this, staff are first aid trained and have a good understanding of first aid procedures, further promoting the welfare of children.

Children benefit from a balanced, nutritious diet because the centre has developed strong links with the nutritionist and has a commitment to promoting healthy eating. Menus are planned in advance and children have many opportunities to sample a variety of cultural dishes. Mealtimes are very sociable and provide an environment for children to develop their social skills and interact in a positive way with both staff and their peers. Babies are encouraged to develop their independence by feeding themselves where appropriate and older children serve themselves during lunch and snack times. Children are well hydrated throughout the day and are able to help themselves to drinking water, via the water dispenser, helping them to develop an awareness of their bodies.

The centre's commitment to promoting children's physical health is exceptional and highly effective. Children benefit from a garden which they have been involved in designing. Staff sought the views of children in terms of how they would like the garden to be set up and were encouraged to draw their designs. Parents were also able to put their views forward via a workshop. So as a result, the outdoor area benefits from a wide variety of equipment which helps to develop children's physical skills. They are able to access a good balance of challenging, outdoor activities throughout the day, which helps to promote their confidence and independence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent health and safety procedures ensure that children's overall welfare is of paramount importance. Staff ensure that areas used by children are kept free of hazards and that any areas deemed unsafe are out of bounds to children, promoting their safety at all times. The centre has a high commitment to safeguarding children and have thorough procedures in place, which ensure that staff and parents know what to do should they have concerns about children in their care. For example, comprehensive information regarding safeguarding is displayed for parents and staff, and is audited every six months to ensure that information remains relevant and up-to-date. In addition to this, regular training regarding safeguarding is available to both staff and parents.

Comprehensive records regarding risk assessments are in place for both the premises and off site visits. Arrival and departure procedures are comprehensive and good systems are in place

for lost or uncollected children. In addition to this, every group room has an appointed Fire Marshall who is responsible for ensuring that fire procedures are adhered to during an evacuation. Monthly fire drills are held with children and fire points are tested weekly. Equipment and resources used by children are very well maintained and are also subject to regular risk assessments, enabling children to play freely and independently.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from a highly stimulating environment which promotes independence and autonomy. For example, staff ensure that resources are low level and that children have excellent opportunities to make choices that encourage and develop their natural curiosity. Children are provided with ample opportunities to make sense of their environment through well planned creative activities, role play, music and story telling. So as a consequence, children flourish, settle well and quickly become confident in their interactions with staff and their peers. Excellent links are in place with the local and wider community so that children's sense of enjoyment is promoted.

Staff involve children in a variety of projects enabling them to develop firsthand, developmentally appropriate learning experiences. For example, the children were involved in a two year project with the Royal Philharmonic orchestra, which resulted in musicians visiting the centre on a weekly basis and introduced children to a variety of sounds, instruments and music. Children were also invited to performances held at the Royal Festival hall in London, helping to consolidate their understanding and appreciation of music. The centre is also about to embark on a project with the Globe theatre which will involve visiting actors leading drama sessions with the children and staff. Comprehensive assessment procedures are in place and staff use the Birth to three matters framework to inform planning, helping to meet the learning needs of children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are provided with a good range of learning experiences that help them make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and planning takes place on a daily basis according to the emerging interests of the child. Activities are evaluated and learning intentions are identified. However, it is not always clear how the specific needs of older or more capable children are planned for. Comprehensive records of achievement are in place for children and contain a range of observations, photos and samples of children's work. Very good use is made of both the indoor and outdoor spaces and children enjoy ample opportunities to access outdoor play throughout the day. Children play well together and learn to share and take turns during play.

A good range of activities and resources are in place to support children's mathematical development. For example, children enjoy learning about number, when counting the days of the week during a group time activity or playing 'What's the time Mr wolf' with their peers. They benefit from a range of practical activities that enable them to develop an understanding about concepts such as calculation shape, weight and size. For example, children make their own play-dough using measured ingredients and regularly participate in sand and water play. Staff consolidate children's learning further by introducing appropriate mathematical vocabulary during children's play. Children discover a range of ways to investigate their natural and constructed environments because staff provide a variety of planned topics and activities that

help children gain a better knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, children grow vegetables in the designated gardening area and collect snails for their display table, consolidating their understanding of lifecycles and growth. Children's appreciation and understanding of technology is developed via regular access to the computer and by competently handling equipment such as the tape recorder, CD player and headphones independently.

Children are confident speakers and are skilfully able to express their needs and preferences during play. Staff use good questioning techniques to stimulate discussion between children, enhancing the quality of children's responses to their learning environment. Children learn that print carries meaning and are developing a fondness for books. They have access to a well stocked book area which contains a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Children have many opportunities to develop their writing skills and pay close attention to the features and purpose of the written language in their surroundings and can see their own attempts at writing displayed. A diverse range of media such as drawing, painting, constructional activities and role play, helps children to make good progress regarding their creative development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The centre demonstrates an exceptional commitment to parents and carers which is a key feature of the provision. Staff and parents have a mutual respect for each other's point of view and recognise that good communication contributes to children's overall wellbeing. Parents are fully involved in the decision making process about the general organisation of the centre and are considered as partners in children's learning. For example, forums are held with parents bi-monthly and parents are fully involved when the centre's policies and procedures are reviewed. In addition to this, both formal and informal reviews are held with parents about their child's progress. Parents are heavily involved in fundraising activities for the centre. Successful bids for money from a variety of sources has enabled the centre to design and equip a new outdoor area for children at the centre and a recent successful bid will enable parents to have access to digital cameras that can be taken home to record their child's achievements. A detailed complaints procedure is in place and a system is in place to record complaints from parents made directly to the centre.

Partnership with parents and carers who receive nursery education is outstanding. Extensive information regarding the Foundation Stage curriculum is in place and detailed plans of activities are available for their perusal. This helps parents become involved and understand how best to support their child's learning. In addition to this, the centre manager has organised a workshop for parents so that they are aware of the new Early Years Foundation Stage due to be implemented in September 2008 and how it will impact on their child's learning.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of the differing needs of children and use excellent strategies to manage children's behaviour. So as a result, children have a clear understanding of their boundaries. Inclusion of all children is a high priority at the centre. Staff are highly committed to recognising children as individuals and embrace similarities and differences with a positive attitude. For example, staff ensure that the learning environment contains a diverse range of equipment reflecting the local and wider community, as well as challenging bias and prejudice, helping to foster children's self-esteem. Extensive support is in place for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff work in partnership with parents and external agencies and ensure that individual educational plans are reviewed on a regular basis, so that the needs of children are met. Children benefit from a key worker system and a designated transition

co-ordinator is in place to enable a smooth transition for children when they change group rooms. In addition to this, the transition co-ordinator is responsible for developing links with the local feeder schools to help children prepare for school and adjust to a new setting. For example, children are given the opportunity to visit their new school, meet their teacher and find out about the daily routine. So as a result children settle easily and feel secure.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The organisation of the setting is exceptionally well managed because the centre manager demonstrates a very clear understanding of the National Standards and associated regulations and has ensured that all required documentation is in place. The centre manager's passion to provide high quality services to the community means that the centre is constantly reviewing its practice via the provision of regular training for staff, regular meetings with parents/carers and by developing strong links with external agencies. Thorough policies and procedures coupled with a high commitment from staff, ensure that children's overall safety and wellbeing is maintained at all times. In addition to this, comprehensive vetting procedures for staff ensures that they are suitable to work with young children. Excellent use of accommodation and resources provides children with high quality learning experiences, helping them to develop confidence and independence.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. The centre manager is committed to developing the provision of nursery education within the centre and has systems in place to monitor the quality of education provided. For example, staff meet on a regular basis to discuss practice issues and training is provided for staff to build on areas of learning requiring improvement. However, planning of activities requires further development and input, to help staff identify clearly how the differing needs of children are planned for. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection recommended that all of the premises and outside areas are maintained to a suitable standard. It was also recommended that children have daily access to the outdoor climbing and balancing equipment.

Since the last inspection, the centre has made excellent improvements. The premises have been redecorated throughout and the outdoor area has been extensively refurbished. This has enabled children to be cared for in a pleasant, welcoming environment and to have access to a good range of outdoor equipment suitable for climbing and balancing.

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

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

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):

- ensure that plans clearly show how activities will be extended for older or more capable children

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