

Alderholt Sunbeams Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY280020
Inspection date	24 January 2008
Inspector	Pamela Woodhouse
Setting Address	c/o St. James C of E (VC) First School, 17 Park Lane, Alderholt, Fordingbridge, Hampshire, SP6 3AJ
Telephone number	01425 656382
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Registered person	The Trustees of Alderholt Sunbeams Pre-School and Supertots
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?

Alderholt Sunbeams Pre-school is run by a voluntary parent management committee. The pre-school opened in 1967 and operates from its own building which is situated in the grounds of St James CE (VC) First School near the centre of Alderholt in Dorset. The pre-school has a separate enclosed outside play area.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. It is open every week day during school term times from 08.30 until 15.00. Children may also attend for shorter morning or afternoon sessions. Children mainly come from the village and there are currently 35 children attending the setting, of whom 26 receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The setting employs six staff, four of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. There are two staff members who are currently working towards a qualification and the manager is studying for an Early Years degree.

The committee also run a parent and toddler group which operates from the village hall.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted well. They learn the importance of personal hygiene through their daily routines and this is also reinforced through discussions and activities. Children gleefully share their knowledge about germs and how these can be avoided or reduced which demonstrates that they understand why, for example, fruit and hands are washed before eating. Effective precautions are taken to reduce children's risk to the spread of infection. For example, they do not attend when they are ill and advice is taken from the local health authority about exclusion periods to ensure that the infectious stage is passed before children return to the pre-school. Parents are also kept informed of any illnesses circulating so that they can take action which is appropriate for their children's health. All staff hold suitable first aid certificates which enables them to administer basic first aid to the children in the case of accident or injury. Specialist training is undertaken so that they can undertake specific medical intervention in an emergency. For example, using an epipen.

Children's healthy lifestyles are promoted through the provision of healthy snacks, fresh air and exercise. This is consolidated through activities which enable children to learn in an enjoyable way how to keep fit and well. They play outside most days on a range of equipment which promotes the development of their large motor skills such as wheeled toys, balancing beams and climbing equipment. In addition, they are able to dig in their own garden patch. Children plant and tend to salad leaves and vegetables which, when mature, they prepare and eat as part of their healthy living activities. Parents fully support the healthy eating ethos by providing their children with nutritious lunch boxes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe because suitable steps are taken to ensure that they are appropriately protected in their environment. Measures include ensuring that the premises are secure so that visitors to the setting cannot gain unnoticed access and that children cannot leave them unobserved. Their risk of accidental injury is reduced because staff undertake a daily check of the premises both indoors and outside, removing or rectifying any potential hazards before the children arrive. The outdoor safety play surface provides a soft surface to cushion children should they fall and high adult to child ratios ensure that they are supervised well. There is a good balance between freedom and setting safe limits which allows for children to learn about protecting themselves and their peers. For example, creating their own space when digging in the garden so that they do not injure themselves or others with their gardening tools.

The premises are presented well which means that children can move around their environment freely and safely. They are able to access their play provision easily which enables them to make independent choices and the range of good quality equipment is appropriate to their age and stage of development. Care is taken to ensure that all play provision and equipment is safe and for this reason is purchased from reputable pre-school suppliers.

Children's welfare is promoted due to the clear procedures in place to protect them from harm. All staff are confident about their roles and the steps they should take if they have concerns about any of the children in their care. There are clear procedures for the safe collection of children and staff will only release them to people authorised by their parents to do so.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a varied range of activities throughout the session and are happy and settled, showing a great enthusiasm for learning. They confidently leave their parents and quickly settle down to concentrate on their chosen activities which sustain their interest well. Children have established good relationships with their peers and with the adults who care for them. Activities are adapted to ensure that they offer appropriate challenges and this enables the younger children to benefit from the same themes and topics as their older peers. For example, older, more able children are able to assemble their Chinese lanterns without any adult input whilst the younger children are appropriately supported by staff. Younger children's progress is monitored by regular observations and linked to the Birth to three matters framework. However assessments are not always used to effectively plan for the next stage in their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's learning and development is promoted well because staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They plan a programme of activities which help them to make progress through the six areas of learning. Activities interest and enthuse the children because they are challenging and encourage them to think for themselves about how they might approach the task. For example, they decide how to make and decorate a Chinese lantern, cutting the shape themselves, applying a design and choosing which method of fixing to use to assemble the pieces. Staff promote children's independence by providing non-intrusive support to help them to complete tasks to their own satisfaction. For example, some children are very capable of unrolling and cutting a length of sellotape single handed to join their lantern whilst others need assistance to hold the tape steady. Effective teaching methods such as staff asking the children open ended questions to encourage them to think and inviting them to put their own ideas forward help to promote children's learning. There is plenty of discussion. For instance, the short plenary session gives children the opportunity to reflect on and share with their peers, the activities that they have participated in during the course of the day. Children's progress is monitored through frequent observations which are used to form an assessment of their abilities. However, these are not used to effectively plan for the next step in their learning.

Children display good levels of confidence, independence and sense of responsibility. They are sociable and have established good friendships with their peers and maintain a warm, friendly rapport with staff. They concentrate on their chosen activities for sustained periods of time and readily help with tasks such as tidying away their toys and offering good support to their peers. For example, some older children quite spontaneously help younger children to make face masks. Children take turns to prepare the tables and place settings for snack time, taking their responsibility very seriously by making sure that the tables are washed and each child has a chair, cup and place mat. They are developing their reasoning skills, for example, when another child joins the group, children work out between them how they are going to divide the rice so that they can all take part in the activity. Children have a good command of language and communicate well. They are able to make their needs known and confidently engage in discussion and conversations with their peers and staff to share news and ideas. Children are developing an understanding of letters and sounds to promote their speaking and listening skills and have opportunities to draw and make marks on paper to practise their emerging writing skills. However, they do not have many opportunities to name their own pictures. Children enjoy listening to stories and also looking at books on their own and with others. Some children

confidently and spontaneously tell a story to a group of their peers mimicking an adult voice and asking the children to sit quietly or they won't be able to hear.

Children are developing an understanding of simple mathematical concepts. They readily count and understand the meaning of more and less as they add to, and take away from, when measuring rice into different shaped and sized bottles and containers. They recognise numerals as they match the corresponding number of pennies to the correct figure. Children use mathematical language in their activities and conversations. For example, comparing the length of sellotape and discussing between them who has cut off the longest and shortest lengths. They use resources such as compare bears to differentiate between different sizes and to place objects in sequence.

Children have access to a varied range of creative play resources and materials to stimulate their imagination and promote their creativity. The role play area changes frequently to support planned themes, for example, it is currently a Chinese restaurant. Children dress in Chinese garments and use utensils such as woks and chopsticks to prepare their imaginary meals. They enjoy using musical instruments informally and, in a joint venture with the adjacent school, occasionally take part in music sessions. Children have everyday access to a range of resources to promote their creativity, they paint and make collages as well as making models with various boxes, tubes and cartons.

Children's awareness of the wider world is promoted well. They learn about other cultures and traditions, such as celebrating Diwali and Chinese New Year through a range of activities which are linked to all areas of learning. This approach makes their learning experiences more meaningful to the children as it gives them an opportunity to discuss diversity as they participate in the activities. Children learn about their local environment and nature through activities such as bird watching and planting salad leaves and vegetables in their garden. They feed the birds regularly and are able to watch them from indoors using their binoculars. The wild life area is well used by the children who explore the area for bugs and traces of the squirrel that visits regularly to feed from the bird feeders.

Children have some opportunities to operate simple technology. For example, they play with cash registers and telephones in the role play area and enjoy taking digital pictures of the models they make with their construction materials so that they have a record to take home. Ready access to a range of tools and activities promotes the development of their hand-eye co-ordination and their small muscle skills. For example, they competently and independently use scissors to cut out paper shapes and around outlines and use a range of materials to mould and shape, for example, wet sand and play dough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are suitable systems in place to ensure that children are included in all aspects of the pre-school. For example, there is easy access to the premises, facilities and activities are adapted to meet the children's stage of development. However, the easy access toilet is generally used as a store cupboard. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) liaises with other professionals involved in the children's care and learning to ensure that this is consistent between each party. She regularly attends local network meetings to keep herself informed and up-to-date about current issues. She ensures that the information is disseminated to all staff so that they in turn are fully informed and as a result, children benefit. Children's individual

needs are met because they each have a key worker who observes their progress and keeps their parents informed by liaising regularly with them.

Children behave very well and have a good understanding of right and wrong. They respond positively to the few boundaries because these are kept to a minimum and are gently but consistently applied. Children are polite and show respect for their peers, adults and their environment. They readily help with small tasks such as tidying away their activities and taking turns to prepare for snack. They play cooperatively with their peers. For example, several children share and take turns to create a train track, whilst others organise their respective roles in the role play area, sharing ideas about how they should progress their activity. Children's awareness of the wider world and diversity is promoted through activities which permeate throughout the session. For example, their current topic about China includes role play, creative, mathematical and language activities. This not only helps to consolidate their knowledge about areas of the curriculum but also to understand through practical activities about different cultures and traditions. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive comprehensive information about the setting, its policies and procedures so that they have a clear understanding about how the pre-school operates for the benefit of their children. They are kept well informed about current events through newsletters, display boards and regular communication. Parents enter into an agreement which enables staff to put appropriate systems in place to ensure their children's needs are met appropriately. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and are kept informed about topics and activities with suggestions as to how they can help their children at home. Parents are encouraged to share their expertise such as gardening skills and to become active members of the committee. They are able to discuss their children's progress regularly through both formal and informal arrangements and the progress files are readily available to them. However, parents are not involved in contributing to the children's starting points on admission to support their early assessments.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by a qualified, experienced and established staff team who work very well together, sharing roles and responsibilities. They attend regular training events to increase the level of their qualifications and to up-date their knowledge of, for example, safeguarding children and first aid procedures. There are effective systems in place for the recruitment and selection of new staff which includes a robust vetting procedure to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. An induction period is followed by an appraisal to confirm that they are suited to their role and the ethos of the setting. All staff receive good support from the committee. They have regular appraisals to monitor their practice and to identify their on-going training and development needs. As a consequence, they show commitment and enthusiasm for their respective roles.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming, cheerful environment which is organised well and suitably arranged to promote their independence and ease of access to play provision and activities. The high adult to child ratios and effective staff deployment enable children to be supervised well and receive good attention both individually and in small groups. Sessions are well-balanced to provide opportunities for children to have time to make independent choices about what they do as well as structured times, for example, to accommodate being together as a whole group.

The setting's policies and procedures are clear and provide a framework for good practice. These are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are current and remain relevant to the business of the provision. Children's records and related documentation are maintained and readily available. These are stored securely to maintain confidentiality and regularly updated to take account of any changes to the children's circumstances.

Leadership and management is good. There are suitable systems in place to monitor the nursery education. For example, the environment, working practices and activities are regularly evaluated and changes imposed where necessary to improve the quality of the provision. However, these are not always used to monitor the effectiveness of children's progress. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss plans and daily activities, each member of staff taking responsibility for a particular activity. As a result, activities are well resourced and prepared. Good links have been forged with the school with regular visits to participate in joint activities such as music sessions and celebratory events. Reception teachers make regular visits before children move up to the school and children make visits to the class rooms. This practice promotes a smooth transition to school and the next steps in their education. The committee and staff team are committed to improvement and further developing the provision. For example, they are currently developing a system for promoting letters and sounds and are looking at ways to offer the children free flow play between indoors and outside. This will enable children to have a greater choice of activities to choose from.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to: ensure that the behaviour management policy is implemented consistently by all members of staff; implement a procedure to ensure that the premises are checked thoroughly before use; make sure that copies of the policies and procedures of the pre-school are made readily available for parents; review the planning of activities to ensure that equal emphasis is given to all areas of children's learning and extend the partnership between parents and staff to make sure that parents are kept well informed about the activities being provided and what their children will be learning.

The provider has addressed these issues by: ensuring that all staff have attended behaviour management training and introducing an induction and mentoring system to support them. As a result, staff manage children's behaviour confidently and consistently which, in turn, leads to happy and well behaved children. A system has been introduced to check the premises before the children arrive. This ensures children's safety. Parents have free access to the full range of policies and procedures documents so that they are kept fully informed about how the provision is organised for the benefit of their children. The planning relates to all areas of learning and closely follows the stepping stones to ensure that children receive a rounded nursery education. Partnership with parents has been strengthened by the introduction of individual meetings between parents and their children's key worker. In addition parents have access to their children's progress records on demand.

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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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 children have dignified access to toilet facilities

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 children's observations and assessments are used to plan for the next steps in children's learning more effectively (also applies to care)
- continue to develop the system for involving parents in contributing to their children's starting points to support their early assessments (also applies to care)

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