

Aycliffe Drive Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	129314
Inspection date	09 January 2008
Inspector	Margaret Coyne
Setting Address	Aycliffe Drive JMI School, Aycliffe Drive, Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 6LJ
Telephone number	01442 404012
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Registered person	The Trustees of Grove Hill Voluntary Nursery School Association
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Aycliffe Drive Pre-School opened in 1978 and operates from the nursery unit of Aycliffe drive JMI school in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. The group have access to two base rooms and toilets. All children have shared access to a secure, enclosed outside area. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 12.00 to 15.00 for 38 weeks of the year.

There are currently 26 children aged from two years six months to under five years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four staff. Of these, three staff, including the play leader hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receive support from a qualified teacher and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. They gain a good awareness of how and why we wash our hands and when it is important to do so. For example, after using the toilet, before meals and snacks and after messy activities. Younger children develop their understanding as they watch others, through topics and discussion and by the positive role modelling of the adults. Children are protected from infection through clear hygiene routines which are practised by the group. For example, the toys and equipment are maintained to a high standard of cleanliness, activities are developed that relate to keeping healthy such as topics about 'Myself', and the group's sick child policy. Overall the high standard of cleanliness throughout the setting contributes to the children's good health. Staff are well informed about children's health issues and a high standard of records and documents are in place. A high level of staff hold first aid certificates and have a worthwhile understanding how to administer first aid to a child to protect their health and prevent them becoming distressed.

Children benefit from the healthy snacks on offer. The snacks provided offer children healthy choices and helps them gain an understanding about eating in a healthy fashion. Staff gain information from parents about any allergies or dietary requirements and ensure the snacks provided reflect this. Healthy eating is explored and promoted with cooking activities for children to gain an understanding of healthy food. This is extended with activities such as gardening where children have been able to grow some vegetables such as runner beans for themselves. Children enjoy the snacks and have opportunity to taste fruit, breadsticks, celery and have drinks such as milk or water. A happy, social occasion is created for the children as they get together for snacks and lunch club. They sit with staff in key groups and learn social skills and good manners. Staff turn these times into a learning opportunity for the children. Children have the opportunity to prepare some snacks for themselves which helps them gain an interest in the food and opens up new conversations about food types and healthy options.

Children enjoy a stimulating range of equipment to promote a healthy life and their physical development. Activities are provided to encourage children to use their bodies to keep fit and healthy. These are fun and interesting and maintain the children's interest and enjoyment of physical play. For example children enjoy walks around the school grounds. They enjoy their outdoor play as they pedal wheeled toys and use small equipment such as balls and hoops. The garden is set out to incorporate climbing and balancing skills with the various climbing frames. Children also have opportunity to coordinate and control their bodies as they move around obstacle courses and take part in music and movement sessions. During indoor play, children access a range of equipment to develop both large and small muscle control and their dexterity and hand and eye coordination is developing well as they confidently use scissors, other one handed tools and manipulate small figures and construction toys. They are able to recognise how exercise affects their bodies as they get hot and tired and their heart beats faster. Staff ensure all children are able to take part and provide an energetic range of physical play experiences for younger children and adapt activities to ensure all children are challenged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is paramount to the organisation of the pre-school. Staff recognise hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Purposeful risk assessments are carried out and a daily check sheet is completed. All staff share in the responsibility for keeping the children safe. The setting is well planned with lots of space for children to move safely around activities. The rooms are bright and cheerful which makes them warm and welcoming for children, staff and parents. Well-implemented safety and security precautions are in place to promote and safeguard the children's welfare. For example, the front door is kept locked and the garden is fully enclosed. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe in the setting as they explain and practise simple procedures such as, emergency evacuation and the boundaries necessary to keep themselves safe. For example, not running inside, picking up toys and safety with sand and water play. Staff effectively explain safety to the children in a simple but positive manner aimed at their level of understanding so they can operate safely within their environment. This is reinforced with visits from 'people who help us' such as the lollypop lady, the road safety team and the fire brigade. Other topics and discussions help children understand about keeping themselves safe as they use role play and small world figures to act out different scenarios.

Children use a broad range of safe, good quality, age-appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are well-organised throughout the setting in storage units, on child-sized tables and shelves. This encourages children to become independent and gain safe access to their resources. Good use of low-level storage units encourage the children to access additional items to extend their play independently when they have time. Children show respect for their toys and equipment and help to tidy items away.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and protected because all staff have attended recent training and are knowledgeable about child protection and the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Their good practice ensures that concerns can be dealt with in a sensitive manner and a designated person is responsible to share information with outside agencies to ensure children are protected at all times. A policy is in place with regard to the procedures to follow in the event of any allegations made against a member of staff and is a valuable document for parents and staff to have access to. However, some aspects of the policy have not yet been updated with current information with regard to the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. This will ensure parents and staff are fully aware of the guidelines the pre-school will follow to ensure children are protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are secure and settled. They enjoy their time at the pre-school and readily participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. They are gaining confidence as they form relationships with others and with staff. Their personal development and self-confidence are consistently promoted because staff treat all children as individuals, interacting and offering appropriate support. Staff sit with the children and engage in their play and learning together. They join in enthusiastically with their play and conversations, enhancing children's confidence and self-esteem. This is evident as staff help the children learn new skills on the computer. New children settle well because staff are very caring, offering appropriate support to individuals. They help children gain an understanding of the daily routine and where things are set up within the room. This helps give them a sense of belonging in the group and helps children settle feeling happy within the environment.

Children's interest is maintained and their natural curiosity encouraged because activities are stimulating and offer challenge for the children's ages and stage of development. Some aspects covering younger children's play and learning is covered incidentally and through staff's understanding about how children develop and learn through their play. However, staff are not planning activities for younger children in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework to successfully help younger children make progress. Staff pay attention to getting to know the children and generally make good use of open-ended questions to encourage them to think further and extend their knowledge. They use the group times to encourage children to gain further knowledge as they join in conversations. For example, snack time is used as a learning opportunity for children to talk about the weather, days of the week and develop some mathematical learning as they look at the segments of fruit.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a sound knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. This is complimented with their experience and knowledge of child development. Children's progress is balanced as staff have developed generally effective planning and assessment methods. However, the activities are not clearly evaluated to assess how well they have worked to meet the educational needs of the children. Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in an range of activities. These include regular opportunities to engage in imaginative play, construction, outdoor activities and an assortment of creative activities such as collage-making, messy play and painting. However, the daily routine is rigorous and does not always provide enough opportunity for children to work at their own pace. Staff spend time moving children around activities in their key worker groups which limits their free play time. There are too many group activities throughout the session which eats into the time children can spend exploring activities and making independent choices for themselves.

Children interact well with others, confidently initiating conversations and using language to explain their thoughts and ideas. They have a sense of belonging as they know the routine and their behaviour is very good because they know what is expected of them. Children are learning to share and are seeking out friends to share their play with. For example, a group of boys organise a game with their cars. They set up traffic jams and the 'police car' comes and sorts it all out. Children are developing respect for each other and their toys and equipment. They are willing helpers at tidy up time and share games and toys with each other. Children have opportunities for mark-making and to develop early writing skills through the range of equipment in place to encourage their dexterity and handling of one handed tools. Older children recognise some letters and most children can recognise their own name. The labelling around the room and the use of story and information books develops children's emergent reading and word recognition skills. The comfortable book area is used independently by the children as they look at books for pleasure and the group story time helps children enjoy stories and aids their concentration.

Children are developing some of the skills required for future learning. They show curiosity when playing, exploring resources and joining in discussion with staff. They have opportunity to use different mathematical concepts to develop an understanding of numbers, weight, capacity and simple problem solving. They enjoy construction activities and show developing skills in these areas. For example, children playing with plastic blocks are able to build both vertically and horizontally. They can work out patterns and sequencing as they take part in activities and can build complex shapes. They are beginning to use mathematical language when playing, describing bigger and smaller items and discussing position. Their knowledge

and understanding of the world is promoted through various topics and activities. For example, children have opportunity to explore how things grow and change as they plant bulbs and grow sunflowers and runner beans. They look at the natural world and the life cycles of the butterfly and frog. The group make good use of the computers as children develop their skills and competencies using the different programs to support their learning in other areas. They enjoy making colourful patterns as they gain control with the mouse and use a 'Colour Magic' program. Their understanding of the wider world is extended with topics about different festivals and celebrations. These include familiar celebrations such as Christmas and Easter alongside unfamiliar ones such as Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Children's physical development is promoted. They are developing an awareness of different forms of movement through organised activities such as music and movement sessions, action rhymes and negotiating obstacle courses. The outdoor area is very well planned and separated into different areas of play. Here children can ride bikes, use scooters and climb and balance. They show a developing awareness of their own needs and are able to meet these, for example, visiting the bathroom independently, pouring their own drinks, and putting on their coats and Wellington boots. Many varied opportunities are used to help children develop their creative abilities. They have ample opportunity to take part in group collages, make individual pieces of art work and can be spontaneous using their own imaginations. The role play areas help children further develop their imaginative play as they take part in real life experiences in the home area, with a café, shop and hospital. Other exciting role play takes place where children can develop the areas for themselves. For example, making a dinosaur's cave and the with then current theme, building a winter wonderland. Here children are involved in painting winter scenes and making an igloo. many singing sessions take place and the plans show that children have opportunity to use musical instruments discovering how sound is made.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world. Staff have positive attitudes and present themselves as sensitive role models. This helps children relate to others and they are starting to gain a positive understanding of the needs of others. Children are learning to share and take turns and respond well to direction from adults and other children. For example, children wait for a turn on the computer. Children are valued as individuals which in turn helps them learn to value themselves and those around them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are free to take part in any activity regardless of race, gender or ability and staff are keen that stereotypical roles are not taken. Effective systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language. Full information is gained from parents about children's needs so staff have a secure point to base their care and can adapt activities to suit each child's differing needs. The group's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) has attended many varied training courses to enable her to fully support individual children when required.

Children have a good awareness of the boundaries within the pre-school. They respond well to the consistent approach followed by all adults and this impacts clearly on their security and confidence as they know what is expected of them. Staff have developed positive behaviour management strategies such as reason, explanation and time out to help children learn to manage and control their own behaviour. Staff are calm, polite and respectful of the children and because of this children follow their example. They have an awareness of the difference between right and wrong and will say 'sorry' to other children if they hurt them. Children's

manners show consideration as they say 'please' and 'thank you'. Staff ensure children are occupied throughout the session which impacts on their behaviour as they have little time to become bored or frustrated.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents' play an active role in the pre-school and this in turn helps them support their child's care, learning and play. However, information about the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the daily activity planning is limited to help parents extend activities at home for the benefit of their child's learning. Colourful posters, photographic displays and examples of the children's art work helps create an attractive setting for parents to see what their children have been involved with. However, they do not have the opportunity to meet regularly with key workers to discuss their child's progress and achievements. A policy is in place for parents to gain an understanding of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about the care their child receives. However, this has not yet been updated with Ofsted's current address and other information linked to the complaints process. Staff are friendly and approachable and are happy to verbally share any aspects of the children's day with parents at collection time. This helps foster a good working relationship between home and pre-school and contributes to the children's feelings of trust and security.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel secure and confident within an organised environment. This enables them to interact with others and take part in activities that develop their play and learning. The range of activities are planned and organised to help challenge and stimulate the children attending. Staff plan their time effectively so children receive adult attention and support. They have built stable caring relationships with the children and know them well. This ensures children feel secure and confident within the group. Appropriate policies and procedures are implemented to keep the children healthy and safeguard their welfare. However, some policies are out of date and some documentation has not been reviewed to ensure children are cared for by staff who are fully aware of the current practices the pre-school employs. All records and documentation are kept in a secure manner and are readily available for inspection. Children benefit from being cared for by staff who are experienced in working with young children. They are effectively deployed so that they spend their time interacting with the children. Staff have an understanding of their responsibilities and use their initiative to ensure the smooth running of the provision.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The playleader and her staff team have a clear and positive vision of how the group will operate to ensure children's needs are met in all areas after the recent changes have been made with regard to their registration. The Foundation Stage is implemented and the group receive support from a qualified teacher and a development worker. This aids their progress to ensure children are able to learn as they move through the stepping stones. The setting has developed some actions for future development. However, their overall practice is not clearly evaluated to ensure it can be monitored across all areas of the children's care, learning and play.

Recruitment, induction and vetting procedures are followed closely to ensure children are protected and cared for by staff with appropriate qualifications, experience and understanding of child development. A dedicated staff team has been developed who present themselves as positive role models for children to relate to. Staff have different experiences and strengths which help them work well together as a team to promote the learning and well-being of the

children. Staff promote an inclusive environment where each child is important and equally valued. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to devise a staff induction programme, to devise a system to gain information from parents about children's individual needs and to improve communication with parents. The provider also agreed to update staffs knowledge of the Foundation Stage, to review the curriculum planning and assessments of children's progress across the stepping stones and to provide parents with more information to help them understanding the Foundation Stage and the progress their children make.

A formal induction process is now in place for any new members of staff to raise their awareness of how the group operates and the policies and procedures in place. The admission form has been extended so parents can provide more detail about their child's individual needs and stage of development. Some written information for parents has been improved and a newsletter is produced to provide details of events, topics and practice each half term. Other information is communicated verbally with parents. Staff have updated their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage by attending training courses and they have reviewed their planning accordingly to include all aspects of learning. This is also reflected in the children's assessment records where more information about their progress is included and linked into the stepping stones. Some information is provided verbally for parents with regard to the National Curriculum and Foundation Stage. They gain this at visits made to the pre-school prior to their child starting. However, this is not extended with written information to fully assist parent's knowledge and understanding. Informal discussions take place about the children's progress and achievements. However, parents do not have regular consultation times to meet with their child's key worker to gain a clear picture of their child's development.

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 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 satisfactory.

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):

- update the child protection policy to ensure it refers to the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures
- continue to develop the planning and provision of activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities, for example, through use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- update the complaints procedure to ensure complainants are aware that they will be notified of the outcome within 28 days and that a record of all complaints is maintained and appropriate information from that record is shared with parents on request. Also ensure information about the regulators address details are updated
- introduce a system to evaluate the pre-schools progress and performance including a system to regularly review all documentation and records.

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 the daily routine is organised effectively to allow freedom of choice to expand children's play choices and interests and for them to initiate or choose activities for themselves with sufficient time to work at their own pace
- introduce a system to evaluate activities to ensure planning is effective in meeting the educational needs of children
- develop information provided for parents about the Foundation Stage and the weekly planning to support the extension of children's learning at home. Extend this with opportunities for parents to have consultation times with key workers to share information about their child's progress and achievements.

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