

Gan Alon Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	147540
Inspection date	13 March 2008
Inspector	Deirdra Keating / Sarah Johnson
Setting Address	The Manor House, 80 East End Road, Finchley, London, N3 2SY
Telephone number	8346 8560
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Registered person	NEW NORTH LONDON SYNAGOGUE TRUST
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 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?

Gan Alon Pre-School opened in 1996. It operates from one room in a synagogue in Finchley, London. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during term time only. Sessions are from 09:15 to 13:15 each day and 12:15 on a Friday. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 20 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four members of staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is met well because practitioners work well with parents. Policies are proactively shared prior to admission and all written consents are in place. The pre-school have clear policies to protect children from cross-infection, a health and safety policy clearly informs parents about the procedures regarding communicable illnesses. Children are learning well about good hygiene practice and are becoming increasingly independent, staff are on hand to provide support and encouragement as children start to manage their own personal needs. Children receive good care if they become ill or have an accident, a well-stocked first aid kit is readily available and all staff have attended first aid training. Any accidents or medication requirements are carefully documented and signed off by parents on collection.

Children's dietary needs are met well. Staff work well with parents and carers to meet each child's individual needs. Children benefit from a healthy diet, they enjoy varied, nutritious food that is available throughout the session. Children have independent and regular access to water which ensures they remain well hydrated. Staff sit at the snack table and encourage children to learn new skills as they chop fruit; children discuss their diets and the importance of fruit and vegetables, this encourages them to understand about healthy food. Packed lunches brought from home are stored carefully and staff request that these are healthy and nutritious. Children learn about healthy eating through a range of topics and fitness initiatives that the pre-school has proactively participated in.

Children have good opportunities to participate in active play which encourages their physical development. There is a large hall available and staff rotate physical activities inside which enables children to get exercise and develop their physical skills. Children also use the large school playground every day which ensures that all children have opportunities to get exercise outside in the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a suitable environment that is organised well to accommodate them comfortably and support their care, learning and play. The room is within a synagogue and is linked to a shared outside play area belonging to a school. The premises are very secure with all access to the site strictly monitored and checked. Children have a wide choice of very well-organised resources. A low-level shelving unit houses an exciting range of resources to enhance children's play and learning. Children are clearly interested and motivated to play with the toys which are rotated. Staff have to clear the room for other users when it is required.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where staff take steps to minimise most potential hazards. However, there are several areas of the room which could compromise children's health and safety. Children are protected from fire as the required fire safety precautions are in place and staff practise fire drills with the children to ensure they know how to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire. Children are protected well from potential harm because staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children. Staff have undertaken safeguarding training which ensures they have a good understanding of how to put the appropriate procedures into place should a concern arise about a child. The designated

child protection coordinator ensures that procedures are up to date and information is clearly shared with parents prior to admission.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very warmly welcomed in the foyer area by staff and brought into the main room. Those who are new to the pre-school are helped to settle by staff who are extremely sensitive towards their individual needs and quickly find resources that have particular appeal to the child. Settled children are closely observed in order to monitor their progress and provide activities that they particularly enjoy and are motivated by. Consequently, children are purposefully engaged and self-assured in the welcoming and vibrant environment. Children can choose how to spend their time from the wide range of resources available; these are colourful, bright and set out to look appealing and inviting to children. Innovative and creative resources have been provided to capture children's interest and attention. For example, milk bottles filled with coloured water, metal utensils to explore flour and water play and sequins which are used as jewels. These resources are exceptionally well used providing real experiences that are tactile and colourful. Children have formed warm relationships with staff who interact extremely well with them following their interests. Subsequently, children are happy, play enthusiastically and continue to be motivated and excited to learn.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children benefit as the staff have very good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and are able to plan effectively based on their understanding of how children learn. Detailed planning is in place showing a good balance of adult-led activities and child-initiated play, with good links to each of the six areas of learning. There is an effective system for identifying children's starting points in learning and the ongoing next steps in their development. For example, comprehensive assessment folders are collated for each child incorporating regular in-depth observations which focus on their individual development and changing interests. These are supported with scrapbooks of meaningful photographs of the children at play, clearly showing the specific skills they are mastering as they progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff use a wide range of methods to extend and consolidate children's thinking. For example, they skilfully encourage children to develop their painting skills by offering them different colours and suggesting that they try to make new colours by mixing them together. Staff fully support children when they show an interest in specific things, offering them a recipe book when they wish to set up a café in the imaginative area. Staff generally use appropriate methods to support children's behaviour, they are positive and consistently good role models. However, the staff have not established clear boundaries or positive rules at the setting which compromises children's ability to understand what behaviour is acceptable. For example, supervision of children is lacking in the imaginative area, resulting in several disagreements between children as they struggle to share resources. Staff make good use of the indoor and outdoor areas to provide different activities and defined areas for children to play. The learning environment is made attractive and welcoming with displays of children's creative work and photographs which they use to recall and reflect on their experiences.

Children find out about the world around them as they are offered an interesting environment to explore and investigate. For example, they have opportunities to visit the science museum, discovery centre and theatre where they enjoy a range of interesting hands-on learning

experiences. Children enjoy investigating what happens when they mix cornflour with water and they experiment further by adding more water. They show a good awareness of the uses of everyday technology through using cameras, mobile phones and tape recorders with microphones in their imaginative play. A wide range of physical activities are offered to encourage children to develop their skills when using small apparatus, tools and equipment. They safely handle knives when cutting bananas into small pieces and use scissors carefully as they cut paper into strips. They demonstrate increasing control when exploring malleable materials. For example, they enjoy making models from clay, pinching small pieces to make eyes and using cutting and rolling tools to make different shapes. Children are encouraged to master their larger physical movements, as they pretend to fly like birds and become jumping beans.

Children demonstrate their growing confidence when linking up with others for support as they ask for help to put on aprons and seek guidance when their peers are not sharing resources with them. Children are becoming increasingly independent in their routines. For example, they access the toilets with little support, pour their own drinks and ask for a cloth to help to wipe the table. They show a positive level of self-esteem as they seek out staff to show them their finished pieces of creative work. Children are developing their competencies in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They are eager to participate in mark-making activities, as they form lines and circles on paper. They assign a meaning to their marks, describing them as 'a penguin with two lollipops'. Children enjoy further opportunities to write for a purpose as they write letters and take them to the local post box. They show an increasing interest in accessing a range of books as they spend time in the attractive book corner listening to stories read by the staff and independently choosing books which interest them. They show an awareness of the elements that make up a story as they describe the sequence of events in a familiar book and point out the main characters.

Children are learning about connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They count the numbers on a jigsaw puzzle and with support they point out numbers of personal significance including their age. They begin to place numbers in order up to 10 as they write them on the buttons of the telephone they have drawn. Concepts such as capacity are explored as the children fill different containers with sand and use mathematical language such as 'full' and 'empty'. When playing in the travel agency, children count coins into each other's hands and talk about needing more money to pay for a holiday. Children enjoy expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance and imaginative play. They engage in role play that is based on their first hand experiences and play alongside others who are engaged in the same theme. For example, they play at being a dog as their friend takes them for a walk and they make birthday cakes for one another. They show an interest in the way a selection of musical instruments sound and staff encourage them to follow a beat and play with increasing control. Children enjoy painting freely at the easel and this is extended when they are encouraged to recreate the 'Sunflowers' painting by Vincent Van Gogh.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all treated with equal concern, this helps them feel valued. Clear policies underpin good inclusive practice and set out how staff will support children who do not have English as a first language. Children are cared for very well by bilingual staff who read to children in their first language. Staff proactively gain a very good range of information on admission to ensure that individual needs can be carefully respected and met. Children celebrate their cultures and beliefs through hands-on experiences such as cooking, craft activities and celebration parties.

Resources are easily accessible which helps children understand their religious festivals, for example, they use dressing up clothes and imaginative play to celebrate the traditional Jewish Purim festival. A range of resources such as figures and posters are used to reflect positive images of wider society and help children understand their differences and similarities. Children develop a sense of community as they take part in charitable events and support meaningful causes. Children learn social skills and enjoy being with and talking to adults and other children, they work well together in different sized groups. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The setting has a positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Dedicated staff have undertaken a very good range of training to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff have a good understanding of how to best support children working closely with parents and utilising support from the local authority to provide tailored plans for children. The setting works closely with other professionals in order to provide clear objectives and aid communication regarding children with additional needs.

A clear behavioural policy details guidelines regarding behavioural expectations and management in the setting. Behaviour is generally good throughout the session and minor disputes are dealt with by staff. However, expectations are not shared enough with the children which could compromise their well-being and safety. Any minor incidents are shared with parents verbally at the end of the session. The children benefit from the positive partnership with parents through practitioners continuing to share important information about children's needs and interests. Parents are warmly welcomed into the setting and receive good information in a welcome pack. Staff offer settling-in conferences to reassure them about how their children settle into pre-school life. Staff are proactive and flexible in providing support and communication systems to meet the needs of all families.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children's well-being and development are greatly enhanced as their parents are kept fully informed of their progress whilst at the setting. For example, the weekly planning is displayed prominently on the notice board and staff actively share scrapbooks containing photographs of the children mastering different skills. Parents willingly attend information evenings where they find out about changes to the curriculum and they are actively encouraged to take their children's assessment records home to view in detail. This practice is highly valued by many of the parents and they respond positively by adding their own comments to the assessment records. Children benefit significantly as their parents are encouraged to support their learning at home in innovative ways. For example, the weekly book and puzzle lending schemes are very popular with children and parents alike and offer further valuable opportunities for parents to feedback about their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for well by suitable adults who are strongly motivated, dedicated and have had all necessary checks to ensure children's safety. Children are settled and secure as ratios are sufficiently maintained and the environment is organised and welcoming. Staff work well as a good team, are well qualified and fully committed to their ongoing professional development. Children's care, learning and play is supported well by the policies and procedures within the operational plan. Arrival and collection times are recorded correctly and overseen by staff. All documents are in place to support the smooth running of the pre-school. These

are regularly reviewed and stored securely. The manager has a good understanding of the National Standards and her responsibility to comply with the details of the registration.

The leadership and management is good. Children make good progress because the manager is motivated and works well to lead the strong staff team. The staff have a clear agreed vision of what the setting aims to achieve and place emphasis on ensuring parents are fully involved in all aspects of the provision. Staff are reflective and outcomes for children are built upon as they identify areas for improvement during weekly staff meetings and after reviewing comments from parents. Staff appraisals enable individual members of staff to evaluate their practice and to consider their future development, which often includes identifying further training. Children's experiences are enhanced because staff use the knowledge they gain from regular training courses to incorporate new ideas, activities and resources into the provision.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to develop the procedure for uncollected children to include how the pre-school will deal with a situation of a lost child. A clear lost child policy has been developed. The pre-school was also asked to keep an accurate written record, signed by parents, of accidents. This has been done and a record of accidents is maintained and signed by parents on collection. This ensures children remain safe and healthy. At the last nursery education inspection, the provider was asked to improve opportunities for children to use equipment which promotes their learning about information and communication technology and to offer more activities which help them to develop their mark-making skills. Children are now using a good range of everyday technology to support their play including telephones, cash registers and cameras. They often practise their mark-making skills as they enjoy painting freely at the easel and access a good variety of writing tools in the well-equipped writing area. The provider was also asked to improve the staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how it can be used to plan for children's individual needs. Staff have built on their knowledge by attending ongoing training courses covering different aspects of the curriculum and there is a good planning system in place which is linked closely to the principles of the Foundation Stage. As a result, children's learning is enhanced.

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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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):

- develop a daily risk assessment to ensure the premises are clean and safe prior to children arriving and ensure that all risks to children are minimised (this refers to access to the kitchen and office).

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):

- establish clear boundaries and positive rules to help children to understand what is expected of them in terms of acceptable behaviour.

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