

The Avenue Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY349149
Inspection date	03 June 2008
Inspector	Nikki Whinton
Setting Address	Unit 5, Warren Courtyard, Savernake, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 3UU
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Registered person	The Avenue Day Nursery
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Avenue Day Nursery opened in 2007. It operates from rooms within the Warren Courtyard complex at Savernake, near Marlborough, Wiltshire. A maximum of 58 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 08.00 until 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outside play area.

There are currently 57 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 18 members of staff. Of these, nine staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have frequent opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise whilst in the provision. The different age groups are able to play together within the nursery's inviting outdoor area that is covered in a rubberised safety surface and contains a wide range of stimulating, age appropriate equipment. Here the children move freely, confidently and with pleasure. Children in the Foundation Stage classroom have the added benefit of being able to enjoy free flow play into the outdoor area as part of the daily setting routine. A giant canopy covers part of the area, thus ensuring that children have the shade they need to enable them to play safely outside during warm weather. In addition, all of the children attending the setting take part in regular walks around the local rural neighbourhood. Children develop their fine motor control and coordination by learning to handle a range of tools, including felt tip pens, paintbrushes and cutlery.

Children enjoy a wide range of nutritious snacks and freshly prepared hot meals whilst in the provision. Through topic based activities, including baking bread at harvest time or sampling pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, children widen their appreciation of food tastes. Older children are able to help themselves to water at all times, including whilst playing outside. Younger children are frequently offered drinks. Allergies or dietary information is carefully displayed within the base rooms and kitchen for immediate reference. All parental wishes are accommodated. However, there is currently a mix of registration forms in use. Not all registration forms prompt the parents to provide written information of any dietary issues. As a result, children's health could be put at risk.

There is a range of measures to promote children's good health and to protect them from those who are unwell. Older children are learning the importance of washing their hands prior to eating or after toileting. All staff have a current first aid qualification, the group's sick child policy is included in the parents' pack, hygienic nappy changing systems are followed, babies are appropriately supervised when sleeping and correct administrative procedures are followed should accidents occur. However, parents do not always provide written permission for medicines to be given and permission for seeking emergency treatment is not in place for all children currently attending. As a result, children's health may be put at risk.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and rest within a provision that is secure, clean, well maintained and of an appropriate temperature. Colourful wall displays and examples of children's artwork create a welcoming environment for children and parents. Suitable sleep facilities are available and older children are able to use the toilets independently, thus helping them to build their self-care skills. Children are able to self-select from a good range of clean, age appropriate toys that are stored at children's height to encourage independent exploration. Resources for non-mobile babies are placed within their reach so they too can choose which toys they wish to investigate. Children benefit from the staff's appreciation of safety issues concerning the purchase and ongoing maintenance of equipment. As a result, children play with well maintained toys that are safe and suitable.

There is a range of measures to promote children's safety and help avoid accidents. Children are well supervised, socket covers are fitted to all exposed electric points, fire exits are kept clear, emergency evacuation drills are regularly practised and gates prevent children accessing the stairs unsupervised. The staff have a good understanding of additional safety issues when taking children on outings, but do not always take a first aid kit with them.

Children's well-being is promoted by a staffing team that has all undertaken Safeguarding training. They have a good understanding of child protection issues, confidentiality of information and the correct procedures to follow if concerned about the welfare of a child. The group's child protection policy is displayed on the parents' notice board and parents sign as having seen the policy as part of the registration process. This is an effective way of ensuring all parents understand the provider's responsibilities, prior to a child commencing in the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children appear to be settled, confident and relaxed within the setting. They are able to explore independently a wide range of age appropriate resources and benefit from staff that are well deployed to support their care and development. Children have a good rapport with the friendly staff and approach them spontaneously to share their news or to gain hugs and cuddles. Through daily routines such as helping themselves to drinking water or putting their coat on their labelled peg, children have the chance to gain self-assurance whilst in the provision.

Younger children that have not yet started on the Foundation Stage curriculum take part in a range of planned, age appropriate activities. Babies in the Snowdrops room enjoy investigating bottles of coloured liquid and glitter, exploring activity centres, playing with programmable toys and going for buggy rides into the surrounding countryside. Toddlers in the Buttercups room gain pleasure from completing puzzles, sharing books, crawling through tunnels and playing with dolls. Meanwhile, slightly older children in Bluebells, enjoy activities such as painting, exploring dough, engaging in role-play and investigating musical instruments. Staff undertake written observations and assessments of these children to assist them in supporting their progress. These records are always available to the parents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is a strong emphasis on child initiated, free flow play. The playleader has a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and the areas of development covered by activities. Key staff undertake written observations and assessments of the children using the Wiltshire Building Blocks Scheme, although these are not always completed on a regular basis. Other staff within the room, whilst interacting positively with the children are not always clear on the purpose behind the equipment and resources provided and are unsure how to support children's progress along the stepping stones. Children can access a good range of resources both inside and outside, such as books, musical instruments, role-play resources, construction materials, Plasticine and paint. However, the older and more able children are not always sufficiently challenged or stimulated, which leads at times to some instances of inappropriate behaviour, such as during circle or story times.

Children have a good range of vocabulary. They use language confidently, such as when involved in imaginary play, 'turn off your mobiles and put on your seat belts' or when expressing their feelings, 'the boys are too noisy, they're waking the babies up'. Children are beginning to link sounds and letters, such as when discussing which words begin with a certain letter. Through

practical activities, such as self registering or putting their artwork in labelled drawers, children are learning to recognise familiar words in print. They have opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills using a range of materials and enjoy sharing books spontaneously with staff. Children use mathematical language confidently. For example a child informs a member of staff, 'we need one more big one and a little one' when discussing the blankets they still require to make a den. Through practical activities such as completing puzzles, building with construction materials or exploring sand and water, children have the chance to gain an awareness of space, measure and capacity. However, apart from children taking turns to count their peers or the number of cups required at snack time, children do not have regularly planned or sufficiently challenging opportunities to count or solve simple mathematical problems as part of the daily routine.

Children take part in a variety of local outings, such as walks around the surrounding rural environment or trips to the mobile library bus and nearby primary school. By watching the farm vehicles that regularly pass by the play area, searching for mini beasts with magnifying glasses or comparing the differing smells of herbs in the garden, children learn to use their senses whilst discovering more about the natural world. Children are involved in a daily discussion about the weather and seasons as they complete a symbolic calendar. However, there is a tendency for staff to tell the children the correct word cards and symbols to use, which means older and more able children are not sufficiently challenged. Children thoroughly enjoy engaging in sustained role-play and greatly benefit from staff's active involvement in their play. They sing a growing repertoire of songs from memory and gain great pleasure from freely exploring musical instruments as part of their play. Children investigate a variety of media and materials, such as dough, paint and chalk, although some art activities are adult directed involving children using pre-cut shapes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are respected and valued as individuals. They benefit from the staff's awareness of their differing needs and preferences. Children are able to access a suitable range of age appropriate resources such as books, dolls, small world figures and posters to enable them to gain an awareness of diversity. Children attending with additional needs receive appropriate adult support to assist their development and learning.

Generally, children behave very well, as appropriate for their age and stage of development. They benefit from staff who act as good role models in the way they interact with the children. Staff are aware of age appropriate strategies including praise, encouragement and distraction as ways of promoting children's positive behaviour.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are confident and demonstrate good self-esteem. They are able to play independently and to share resources. Through routines such as helping to tidy away the snack time crockery or putting their artwork into their named drawers, children have the chance to develop cooperative and self-care skills. Children take part in practical activities, such as eating noodles with chop sticks as part of Chinese New Year celebrations, making clay diva lamps during Diwali and learning Spanish songs and rhymes with a parent, in order to help them gain an appreciation of a range of cultures and festivals.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are made to feel very welcome in the setting and appear to enjoy spending extended periods of time in the group playing with their children and

chatting to the staff. They are provided with valuable written information about the provision, together with details about how to access the group's policies and procedures. Parents are kept up to date with information about activities and forthcoming events through regular newsletters, the parents' notice board, children's daily diaries and informal discussion with staff. They are actively encouraged to share what they know about their child to aid staff assessment and have twice yearly planned opportunities to meet with staff to discuss children's progress and review their assessment files. In addition, themed meetings are arranged as required, for example, to make parents aware of the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care, learning and development are supported by a suitably qualified and enthusiastic staffing team. The group has a positive attitude towards ongoing professional training. All legally required documentation is in place and securely stored. However, children's personal detail sheets are not regularly reviewed and updated to ensure all information required to support children's care is immediately available. In addition, whilst the attendance of children and staff is properly recorded, the actual arrival and departure times of visitors are not consistently recorded.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The management and staffing team meet on a regular basis to evaluate the quality of the provision and discuss any issues. The nursery is building links with the local primary school, through activities such as attending the school story time. Such liaison helps children in their transition into statutory education. The management has a good understanding of the group's strengths or areas for development and is starting to put strategies in place to aid improvement. However, the organisation of meal times in the Foundation Stage room means that currently children have to sit and wait for their food for extended periods. Staff regularly welcome Wiltshire early years advisors to the provision and use their resulting reports as a means of assisting improvement.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 maintain a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that written parental permission is always obtained prior to administering medication and that written parental permission for seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment is obtained for all children currently attending
- make sure written information needed to support children's care and welfare is kept up to date, and always includes dietary information. Ensure the register of visitors attendance includes their actual arrival and departure times

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):

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the early years curriculum, in order that they can effectively support children's academic learning and progress
- develop the planning and delivery of the early years curriculum. Ensure that regular observations and assessments are completed on the children that are used to plan activities that offer individual children sufficient challenge and help them to progress towards the early learning goals
- review the organisation of snack and meal times within the Foundation Stage room to ensure children do not have to sit and wait for extended periods before receiving their food.

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