



Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY286886
Inspection date	20 September 2005
Inspector	Lynne Naylor / Michael, David Charnley
Setting Address	Lindle Lane, Hutton, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 4AQ
Telephone number	01772 619900
E-mail	
Registered person	Ashbridge School Ltd
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?

Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery is a privately owned limited company situated in Hutton, a rural area, south of Preston. The nursery and out of school services registered in 2005 and operate from an established independent school in the school buildings and a purpose built nursery premises within the school site. A maximum of 200 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children have access to

secure outdoor play areas.

There are currently 223 children aged under 8 years on the nursery and after school service roll. Of these, 44 children receive funding for nursery education.

The nursery employs 43 staff. Of these, 33 staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years or teaching qualifications. Nine of the staff are working towards a qualification. Additional staff are employed for administration, caretaking and maintenance work.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. Staff ensure that children follow strong routine procedures, which in turn minimise the risk of infection and cross contamination. Staff lead by example, as a result children learn the importance of hand washing at appropriate intervals of the day knowing that this helps prevent the spread of germs. Children are actively encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene such as seeing themselves to the bathroom. This means that they are developing a growing ability to be independent and an awareness of their own physical needs.

Staff exercise vigilant practices in keeping the premises, toys and equipment clean. Such practices allow children to play in a clean environment without risk to their health. Staff, with most holding valid first aid certificates, consistently carry out the correct procedures in managing medicines and accidents. Children's health is therefore protected.

Children enjoy a healthy diet and look forward to home cooked meals which are freshly prepared on the premises. Their diet includes plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables which are good for their health. Children take great delight in sitting together at meal times and comment on how much they enjoy the food. Younger children show their developing independence as they practice the skill of pouring their own drinks with staff's support. Throughout the day, children have independent access to their own water bottles. This enables them to identify their own needs and help themselves to drinks when thirsty. Children develop good social skills as they chat freely to each other at snack and lunch times. They learn about nutrition as staff talk to them about their eating habits and the benefits of eating healthy foods. Staff meet children's individual dietary needs well using the good information, gathered from parents, in relation to children's likes, dislikes and any other dietary requirements.

The health of babies and toddlers is promoted well because staff sensitively follow their routines for sleep and rest. Younger children enjoy the close, warm, supportive relationships they have with staff which results in them feeling self assured. Older children talk about simple health issues such as washing hands to remove germs and

getting enough sleep. They have a growing awareness of what happens to their bodies when they are active, such as feeling hot, being out of breath, needing a drink and needing a rest. Older children's independence in self care is promoted well. They are supported well to take off and put back on their shoes and socks at gym time. They are also helped to fasten dressing up clothes.

Staff plan an exciting range of physical activities to suit children of all ages. Much emphasis is placed on children having fun with an excellent range of equipment available to help develop their physical skills. Babies very contently sit, crawl and reach out for toys, discovering how they work with good push and pull movements. Outdoors, children have good opportunities to develop their physical motor skills. They use large equipment in imaginative ways. For example, they show increasing balance and control when walking along bridges constructed from large blocks. They crawl over large tractor tyres and through the tunnel in the wooden castle. They walk along trees laid on the ground and step carefully on bedded in tree stumps displaying increasing skills and balance. They also enjoy using the trampoline where they bounce up and down with good control. Younger children experience great pleasure as they scoot around on push along toys, learning to adjust their speed in the process.

In the gymnasium, older children learn to control their movements, stopping and starting appropriately, through simple movement games and moving to music. They use this skill, outdoors, to control their speed and avoid obstacles when following each other, along the painted roadway, with things such as prams to push and pull, and wheeled toys to ride.

Children use a range of small equipment frequently; for example, balls and cricket bats. Staff encourage them to use it and provide sufficient challenge for children at different stages of development. Children manipulate dough well using their hands and a range of implements. They thread a range of items and use construction sets well. Children's fine motor skills are fostered well as they competently use tools and materials safely during creative activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play, eat and rest in an environment that is welcoming and visually stimulating. There are lively displays on view and bright furnishings that capture children's interests. This is as a result of staff's dedication in making the premises child centred. Children benefit greatly from the use of safe, high quality, wide ranging resources. These are checked for safety, by staff periodically, and set out well according to children's age and ability. Children independently select equipment that is safely stored on low level shelves. The available equipment supports children well in many aspects of their learning.

Children are protected from hazards, due to the regular risk assessments carried out and the clear policies and procedures concerning safety. Staff exercise vigilance in line with their responsibilities such as regularly checking the welfare of sleeping babies and escorting children to the toilet. Children learn to take responsibility for

their own safety as staff talk to them about the dangers of climbing on furniture and the importance of wearing protective clothing in the sun such as hats. They are encouraged to pick up dropped items so as to minimise the risk of others tripping and falling. Children are becoming familiar with the setting's emergency evacuation procedures with fire practices carried out on a regular basis.

The registration system relating to children attending the after school club is not entirely effective since staff are not always clear how many are going to be present for each session. However, there are excellent security measures in place which includes close circuit televisions. This facility enables staff to closely monitor access to the provision that in turn helps to protect children's welfare. Children are well protected by the staff's good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and the implementation of appropriate procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies receive excellent levels of care in the form of cuddles, smiles and gentle tones from attentive staff. Strong bonds are formed which increases their sense of well-being. They benefit from routines which are consistent with their experiences at home. Staff make routine activities, such as nappy changing, personal by talking to them about what they are doing, thus promoting their ability to link words with actions. Babies learn basic social skills as they enjoy being in the company of adults and other children. They contently play alongside each other at floor level and curiously observe the bright and attractively set out rooms.

The generous range of activities and resources available captures children's interests well. They enjoy the textures of natural materials and the colours and sounds of manufactured toys. A baby, for example, shows delight as he discovers how to use a musical instrument. He then proceeds to move his body to the rhythm of the sound he makes, this new found skill is applauded by the respective key worker. Babies develop early communication skills as they attract the attention of staff who in turn respond encouragingly to their sounds during play. Staff monitor, to good effect, the progress of individual children by regularly checking on their development and recording their observations, this system serves to promote children's welfare.

Children between the ages of one and three are confident and happy in their relationships with staff. They are beginning to learn about the expected codes of behaviour as they happily play alongside each other and choose from the good range of resources available such as puzzles, small world toys and outdoor equipment, suitable to their age and stage of development. Staff's good use of the Birth to three matters framework is having a positive impact on improving children's achievements as they plan according to the different areas. Staff have a growing knowledge of the range of experiences which enable babies and children to make greater use of their senses and creative abilities, for example, during heuristic type play. Children's ability to express themselves in a variety of ways is fostered well as they enjoy experimenting with a wide range of media and materials, for example, paint, sand, dough and shredded paper.

Musical activities and story sessions contribute to developing children's communication skills as they learn to listen and take turns when speaking in group situations. Children are given good opportunities to be independent. They are actively encouraged to attend to their own needs, for example, by putting on their own aprons in preparation for craft activity. They are introduced to print that carries meaning, for example individual name cards that they are asked to identify at registration time. Children observe features in the local environment and develop their curiosity as they plant seeds and watch them grow and learn about the life of farm animals.

The good range of activities on offer and input from staff helps children make steady progress. Staff work hard to help children reach their full potential by enhancing existing skills and building on any areas where they need extra input, thus ensuring that children continue to make strides in their development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very secure knowledge of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. This is shown in the planning. Children make good progress in all areas of learning due to well planned teacher-led activities relating to the theme. They enjoy free access to a broad range of activities linked to the six areas of learning. Children are self-sufficient in selecting resources, and best use is mainly made of their independent activities to extend their learning.

Staff take positive steps to find out what children know and can do. Assessment systems identify and record children's steady progress through the stepping stones. The link between the assessments of children's learning and the future planning is clear. Therefore, planned activities are extending children's learning from their known starting point. Plans appropriately give high priority to children learning to listen to each other, share equipment and understand the agreed rules for working together. Children's self-confidence is increased through having a sense of belonging. They work and play in an environment that sets, explains and maintains clear and consistent limits. Consequently, children develop personal values such as honesty, fairness and respect.

Children listen with enjoyment to stories, songs, rhymes and poems and respond to what they have heard with relevant comments, questions or actions. Older children recognise familiar words, such as their names, and are keen to identify other children's names. Children are using their growing literacy skills for real purposes, such as writing and receiving letters and inputting their name on the computer. Children make marks and many recognisable letters as part of their play, for example, when using wipe clean boards in the designated writing area or whilst working with dough. They sometimes explain what their message says. Adults give children the opportunity to see people writing, talk about what they are doing, and experiment with writing for themselves. However, a lack of printed materials, pencils and notepads in the role play area hinders children's ability to use and develop their growing literacy skills in imaginative play.

Children show a healthy interest in numbers and counting. They enjoy and join in number rhymes and songs; counting up and back. Staff use real situations

particularly well to consolidate children's learning of number. For example, children predict how many will be left when some have gone to the bathroom and calculate how many chairs are needed at snack time. Children see numbers as labels in their environment, through charts or friezes, however, they have little access to resources featuring numerals in the role play areas.

Outdoor activities enable children to explore the natural world and observe change over time. They are keen to talk about their findings in the garden such as spiders and slugs. The setting increases children's awareness of other cultures, for instance by inviting visitors from a range of religious and ethnic backgrounds into the setting. Children have a good sense of time. They differentiate between past and present and talk about past events in their own lives. Children show an awareness of the technology around them, for instance, telephones, lights, washing machines and cash registers. Children's attention is drawn to the use and importance of technology in our everyday lives. They are developing good mouse skills when using the computer. Children have less opportunity to use programmable toys and investigative equipment to support their learning.

Children are familiar with different resources such as paint, crayons, glue and adhesive tapes, and use them for their own purposes. Children have sufficient time and freedom to explore their own ideas and are given sensitive support when they meet problems that frustrate them. The range of resources, as listed on the planning, is not always readily available which limits children's choices. For example, children happily paint on the paper provided, but do not have access to the range of paper sizes, shapes and colours as identified on the planning. Children learn well through their senses, for example, by feeling the textures of different fabrics, planting and smelling plants and flowers or looking closely at themselves in a mirror whilst making a collage portrait. Indoors and outdoors, they work well in two and three dimensions on both a large and small scale.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children from all backgrounds are made to feel very welcome at the setting. The well planned 'settling in' procedures and documentation helps children develop a sense of community within their own group and within the setting as a whole. Staff ensure the atmosphere is happy and relaxed at all times. Children, as a result, develop good relationships with staff, finding them approachable and responsive to their needs.

Staff provide resources and activities that positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. Visits from people who work in the community help develop children's understanding of the roles they play in society, for example, police officer, doctor and fire fighter. Planned activities that raise children's awareness of the wider world involve learning about the different festivals and sampling foods from other countries.

Children are learning to understand what is meant by responsible behaviour, such as older children sitting and listening whilst others speak. The importance of being kind, helpful and considerate towards one another during play is emphasised by the

positive role modelling of staff. Children generally behave well with staff adopting appropriate strategies for promoting positive behaviour. However, in one area of the nursery, there are times when staff are not always deployed effectively to pre-empt unwanted behaviour or consistent in explaining why certain behaviours are unacceptable. This hinders some children's understanding of right and wrong. Staff prompt good manners, giving children praise for their achievements which helps boost their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have time to reflect and listen to quiet, tranquil music. Funded children know and understand the rules which are consistent. They effectively negotiate with each other and take responsibility for their behaviour. They are generally well-behaved, polite, take turns and show concern for others.

Partnership with parents is good. An informative welcome pack provides parents with essential information about the nursery provision when their child enrolls. Parents are encouraged to share information about their child when they join the nursery and continue to share information through regular informal talks with staff. Children's diet and general wellbeing is recorded on a daily sheet and given to parents when they collect their child. This effective communication between parent and staff helps to promote children's welfare and safety. Parents provide staff with a wealth of information enabling appropriate care to be given, forming the basis of ongoing assessment. Parents are kept well informed of the activities taking place within the setting and are invited to approach staff at any time about their children. The progress being made by individual children is conveyed to parents via the key worker system and efforts are being made by the setting to involve parents more in the assessment process. Parents, via the setting's satisfaction survey, indicate they are happy with the service provided and levels of care afforded to their children.

Parents of children who receive nursery education are well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress. They are aware of routines and activities and given information about the Foundation Stage and how to extend learning at home. Each half term, parents are given copies of the plans which are also attractively displayed. Children's progress is discussed with parents when they collect their child. Children's assessment records are clearly linked to the stepping stones so they inform parents about the Foundation Stage of learning. Parents receive regular informative newsletters, but do not yet contribute to the formal assessment records. Information parents provide about their child is not formally used to promote children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff team, many of whom hold relevant early years qualifications, plan a good quality activity programme to suit children of varying ages and to support their learning needs. Staff assume their respective roles well which serves to ensure children are appropriately cared for in the setting. There are good systems for recording and monitoring children's progress via the key worker system. Space and

resources are in the main organised effectively, resulting in children being able to play and learn in a comfortable and relaxed environment.

The required documentation is well organised, up-to-date and stored confidentially. This contributes to the smooth operation of the setting as a whole. Staff implement the setting's policies and procedures to good effect.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. There are good induction and appraisal systems in place that support staff's developmental needs. Training is made available to staff as appropriate with 'in house' opportunities being a regular feature. Planning and assessment systems are monitored across the whole provision with positive links being maintained with the early years teacher team. This ensures that children are provided with a good quality and varied education programme. Children benefit from the setting's strong commitment to improving and developing the service. There is a clear system in place to regularly monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery. A prepared action plan is in place to address the self identified issues. Management and staff have a commitment to build on the quality of the provision. Regular team meetings are a good avenue for sharing information about children's varying needs, therefore, contributing to promoting their welfare. Overall, the provision 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 the last inspection there have been two complaints relating to National Standard 2: Organisation, National Standard 4: Physical environment and National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 4 July 2005. On the second complaint; Ofsted contacted the provider who gave a satisfactory response to the concerns raised. Ofsted are satisfied that the provider remains qualified for registration.

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 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):

- review safety arrangements in relation to monitoring the movements of children attending the after school provision
- ensure staff consistently explain why certain behaviours are not acceptable and apply positive strategies at all 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):

- provide children with easier access to investigative equipment so they can independently explore their findings; and provide a wider range of materials in role play areas which allow children to consolidate their understanding of number and language
- ensure the range of resources, as stated on the planning, are available to support the intended learning outcomes in the independent activity areas.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk