

Attimore Barn Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY401168
Inspection date	08/07/2010
Inspector	Jo Rowley
Setting address	Attimore Barn Scout HQ, Ridgeway, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, Hertfordshire, AL7 2AD
Telephone number	07766 407 317
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Attimore Barn Pre-school registered in January 2010 and operates from the Attimore Barn Scout HQ in Welwyn-Garden-City, Hertfordshire. The provision has sole use whilst in operation and is fully accessible with ramps to the entrance and internal areas. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area and parking in adjoining premises that may be used by the pre-school staff and parents.

Attimore Barn Pre-school sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm Monday to Friday, for older children, with an optional lunch club from 12.15pm to 1.15pm and afternoon sessions, for younger children, are on a Monday and a Thursday from 1.45pm to 3.45pm, term time only.

There are seven members of staff working each session of whom six are qualified. The provision is registered to provide care for 32 children in the early years age range. They are registered on the Early Years and the compulsory part of the Child Care Register. Children on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register share the same facilities as those on the Early Years Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development because they are given effective support to ensure that they are fully included and able to gain the most benefit from activities and opportunities offered to them. Staff commitment to recognising each child as an individual means that all children are respected and encouraged to develop a strong sense of belonging. The two managers, together with their team of staff, methodically evaluate every area of the setting to ensure that they are able to build a comprehensive overview of their strengths and weaknesses. They implement purposeful action plans for the future, enabling them to provide a service which is highly responsive to the needs of all children. Further key strengths are that the caring and committed staff confidently use effective assessment and planning procedures to ensure that all children are offered an extensive range of activities. Excellent partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies, such as the local children's centres, ensure that individual children's needs are met consistently and they are fully safeguarded.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing the self-evaluation and reflection of current practice to further enhance outcomes for children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is significantly promoted as there are highly effective safeguarding procedures in place. For example, training relating to safeguarding children has been completed by all staff, and there are effective recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Advanced safeguarding training is completed by the two leaders and their deputy as designated persons for safeguarding and this is fed back to all staff to further protect children's safety. Highly effective risk assessments and daily checks, completed by staff, mean that hazards and risks to children are minimised. Comprehensive and very well written policies and procedures are robust and reviewed and updated consistently to ensure that the environment is safe and secure. Children demonstrate an excellent awareness of adopting safe and responsible practice, such as using the pre-school bear 'Barney' to promote children's understanding of positive behaviour. All children are reminded of the pre-school rules as there are posters around the setting with a picture of the bear saying 'Barney Bear is looking to see who is following his rules - are you?'. They are fully aware of the rules as staff use regular, although gentle, reminders. For example, a member of staff asks a group of children, "We walk inside and save our running for what?", and the children happily respond "outside".

Children demonstrate that they feel safe and secure as they confidently move in and around the setting, making independent choices as well as approaching staff for help or to include them in their play. An example of this is where a few children are playing football outside in the garden area. They ask a member of staff if she will join in with them and as she does, by going in goal, the children laugh and smile with each goal she saves or lets in. The leaders and all staff demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm in relation to their work and are successful in setting and maintaining high standards. Extensive monitoring and evaluation has enabled the setting to develop exceptionally well-targeted action plans in a short space of time since opening. These plans are based on feedback from staff and parents and mean that changes clearly lead to improvements in the outcomes for children. For example, the recent improvement to the registration procedure for children and parents which ensures that children remain safe at all times. Staff are committed to developing and maintaining excellent partnerships with parents and carers. They are invited to discuss any issues that they have together with the staff and the exceptionally comprehensive systems for exchanging information with parents ensures that staff are fully aware of the children's routines and preferences and parents are full informed of their children's progress and activities. Regular newsletters, meetings with key-workers, open afternoons and evenings, and informative displays throughout the pre-school are also available for parents and carers to enable them to have an awareness about what their children have been doing.

The setting places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the centre of its work and staff are very well-trained in this area. They pay close attention to enhance their understanding of each child's background and needs, actively utilising this information when planning activities. Staff acknowledge that by

continuing to self-evaluate and reflect on their current practice they will further enhance outcomes for children. Staff are caring and they create a highly positive environment where children are happy, secure and confident. Resources are well-organised and labelled with words and pictures to promote opportunities for children to self-select and make independent choices, ultimately promoting inclusion. Staff are always deployed appropriately to fully support children's individual learning and development. There are excellent opportunities for staff interaction as the leaders always ensure that the minimum required staffing ratio is exceeded. The setting also has excellent procedures for liaising with other professionals, for example, they have forged highly effective links with the local children's centres, the area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and local childminders. This ensures that they are able to prepare for children's future transitions, promote consistency and therefore, improve positive outcomes for children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The pre-school is a vibrant, happy and very welcoming setting where every child and parent is effectively supported. Staff show a genuine enthusiasm for their work and children respond appropriately to this with ad-hoc cuddles. The children clearly enjoy being at pre-school as they are consistently busy and show good concentration and perseverance skills. The exceptional planning means that children are offered an exciting and varied range of experiences that reflect their individual needs and incorporate relevant next steps to ensure that they make excellent progress. This is underpinned by practical observation and assessment procedures that enable staff to meet each child's needs in their short, medium and long term planning. Staff are exceptionally skilled in encouraging children to join in with activities, whilst offering them sensitive support. This promotes children's confidence as they are eager to explore and are active in their own learning. All activities offer appropriate challenges and ensure that all children feel included. For example, a group of children play in a pit of shaving foam, most children use their fingers as they are encouraged to feel the foam sliding through their fingers whilst some children choose to feel the foam by standing in it. As the children talk, with the member of staff, about the feel of the foam they use words, such as 'squidgy', 'slimy' and 'slippery', promoting their communication, language and literacy skills.

Children's play and activities are extended because staff always participate at an appropriate level. For example, as children cut their own fruit to make fresh fruit drinks they are encouraged by staff to talk about their favourite fruits, which in turn leads to the fruits that they don't particularly enjoy. The conversation is extended to talk about how the fruit grows, the importance of washing it and what the children think the fruit drink will taste of after mixing up the different fruits. Children's learning is enhanced as staff skilfully capture their interest. For example, as a group of children are filling plant pots with soil a member of staff suggests that they may find some worms in the soil. The children immediately access the binoculars and magnifying glasses as they search for worms in the soil. This prompts lots of discussion about bugs and mini-beasts as well as language, such as big, bigger, small and tiny as they look through the magnifying glasses at an

ant that a staff member has alerted them to. As the children talk about different creatures they decide to extend this further by 'going on a bear hunt'. Staff attention to detail helps children to feel welcome and motivated. There are numerous displays within the setting and examples of children's work which are clearly labelled with their names. A range of music is played in the background as children play and all staff and children enthusiastically join in with music and movement times. After tidy up time, they all take part in the 'stick song'. Children are encouraged to bang their sticks together to the rhythm of the song as they reach up, down, left and right. Before small group time, children have a few minutes to sit and listen to a story and are provided with a drink of water. Staff and children talk about how they are feeling hot and tired and need a drink after playing in the garden which promotes the children's understanding of how physical activities change our bodies.

Children's independence is very well promoted as staff take the time to fully encourage this, for example, a member of staff asks the child if she remembers how they practiced rolling a hoola-hoop. She fully encourages the child and, although the child says she can't do it, the member of staff perseveres and fully praises the child telling her how well she is doing. Children enjoy water and sand activities both inside and outside of the pre-school room. Their imaginations are promoted by adding colours and bubbles to the water and dinosaurs and trucks to the sand. Children's development is promoted as staff make optimum use of the children's individual interests and independence when planning activities. For example, children recently enjoyed a play dough activity where they used real kitchen utensils such as spoons, spatulas, sieves and whisks with the activity further extended to allow children to make their own play dough. The excellent use of outdoor facilities means that children are offered a wide variety of additional experiences and choice of where they play, either outside or inside, as both areas are available for most of the session. Children take part in organised sports events such as manoeuvring their bodies through an obstacle course and using straws to blow ping pong balls across a lake of water. They enjoy sitting on comfy cushions as they listen to a story or using paints to create their own works of art with the support of the staff. An example of this is when some children ask to create their own paddling pool. They paint a cardboard box and then tell the other children that they had made a paddling pool, thus developing the use of their imaginations.

Children make friends with each other easily as they show respect and kindness towards each other. An example of this is when one child sees that another child has sand in their hair and gently brushes the sand away, showing care and concern. All children strive to help staff as well as each other with the promotion of stickers which are used for positive reward. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are gaining an excellent understanding of right and wrong. Staff act as excellent role models, remaining calm and consistent at all times, and the children respond positively to this by showing great care and concern for each other. The excellent procedures for working together with parents, carers and others means that children who speak English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are consistently offered highly appropriate support. Children's self-esteem is very well promoted because their conversations and contributions are genuinely valued. They enjoy looking through their learning journeys, individually or in small groups, as well as photos of children at pre-

school. Children also have 'sticker passports' where their individual rewards and achievements are recorded after discussion with staff, about why they received them. These are then taken home by the children to share with their families.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met