



Avalon School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY298338
Inspection date	30 January 2006
Inspector	Michele Anne Villiers
Setting Address	Caldy Road, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside, CH48 2HE
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Registered person	Avalon School Educational Trust
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Avalon Nursery and Out of School Club opened in 2005. It operates from five rooms in Avalon Private School in West Kirby, Merseyside. A maximum of 52 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.15 to 17.00 during term time. The Out of School care is open from 07.45 to 09.00 and 15.15 to 18.00 during term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children aged from 2 to under 5 on roll; of these 49 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports children with special education needs and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about good personal hygiene through the daily routine. They independently wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet. They learn about dental hygiene during 'dental care' topics, when children bring in their own toothbrush and toothpaste and have visits from the dental nurse and discuss healthy eating. Staff take positive steps to help prevent the spread of infection. Protective clothing is worn when changing nappies and staff ensure tables are wiped clean before meals and after messy play. Some staff are trained in first aid, to deal with minor accidents and some staff are trained to deal with specific illnesses and allergies, such as anaphylactic shock. Staff follow comprehensive sickness policies, to further protect children and all accidents are recorded and the information shared with parents.

Children develop a very positive attitude to physical activity and energetic play. They benefit from daily outdoor activities and access a wide range of good toys and resources that challenge their physical abilities. They develop strength and stamina when using the large climbing frame and slide. Younger children negotiate space well as they manoeuvre wheeled toys and run around. Staff organise games using hoops and bean bags and children enjoy 'sports day' each year. Throughout the daily routine children also have music and dance and each week they participate in planned activities with a qualified physical education teacher, fostering their balance and coordination.

Nutritional food is offered daily, including pasta, rice and fresh vegetables, prepared by the cook. Children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits, having fruit for snack each day and are discouraged from eating sweets or biscuits. Children may help themselves to their own cartons of juice, to quench their thirst and drinking water is freely available.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe and secure environment that is well organised to minimise the risk of accidental injury. Good procedures are in place to ensure unknown persons do not enter the premises. The main entrance is staffed and kept locked at all times, ensuring children cannot leave the premises unsupervised. All visitors sign in and appropriate measures are in place to supervise children at all times. Children have a good amount of space in which to play and freely access a wide range of safe,

stimulating and suitable toys and resources.

Staff conduct good safety measures to protect children from harm. A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out on the premises and toys and all appliances are regularly checked. Staff have accessed training on health and safety and there is a designated health and safety officer to ensure that policies and procedures are effectively used. Children learn about safety and staff gently remind young children to 'be careful' when running around and not to climb on furniture as they may fall. During play on large equipment children discover boundaries and limits and they learn some sense of danger. Planned activities, including 'people who help us', enable children to become knowledgeable about local services, such as the police and fire fighters. The fire evacuation procedure is practised with children, helping them to develop an awareness of what to do in the event of an emergency.

The children's welfare is further safeguarded as staff have a good awareness of child protection issues. Many staff have attended additional training, therefore ensuring they have up-to-date knowledge of possible signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and they are familiar with the correct procedure to follow should there be any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the nursery enthusiastically and enjoy a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities, helping them to make good progress in their learning. Young children have many opportunities to experiment using their senses. They are encouraged to express their own ideas and feelings through art and craft and enjoy using different textured materials to display on the tactile wall. Children explore a range of medium, such as sand, water and play dough, and they investigate various objects in the 'heuristic bag'. Staff achieve a good balance between supervised activities and allowing children freedom to create from their imagination, for example playing in the 'Igloo' tent. Young children develop good language skills as staff sit with small groups to look at books, read stories and introduce new words. They begin to recognise their written name and simple symbols are used around the room to help children make connections with print and objects. Staff have implemented the Birth to three matters framework to support their planning, allowing children to make good progress through play.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning of the nursery education is good. Staff have a very good understanding of foundation stage and early learning goals. Long, medium and short term activity plans are devised and effectively used and activities are evaluated to ensure the learning outcomes for children are met. Staff use good assessment methods to monitor the children's development and progress and adapt activities according to their age and ability. A clear structure to the day is planned and staff make good use of time and resources, therefore ensuring children are well stimulated and interested in their play. Clear instructions are given to children during

organised activities and staff enthusiastically support children, motivating their learning. The environment is stimulating, with a wealth of displayed artwork, colourful posters, toys and resources.

Children are involved in their play and concentrate well. They interact with adults, initiating conversation and play alongside other children, sharing and taking turns. Children are developing high levels of independence. They dress themselves for outdoor play, help to tidy away and collect their own snack boxes at meal times. Children are well behaved and show respect for each other, saying 'sorry', 'please' and 'thank you' appropriately. Children are encouraged to engage in purposeful conversation and staff use good questioning throughout the daily routine to help children use language for thinking. During planned activities staff reinforce the children's language and literacy. They introduce children to a particular letter, such as 'g', and use good props to reinforce the children's learning, studying pictures beginning with 'g', drawing the picture and gathering material such as 'grass'.

Children confidently count and show increasing skills in recognising and using numbers to support their play, for example they number and count plastic bottles. However, little opportunity is provided for older, more able children to fully use calculation and mathematical concepts during practical activities and through their daily routine, such as counting the number of chairs required at snack time, or during group activities. Good use is made of the outside play area and surrounding environment to help children learn about plant and wildlife. They enjoy nature walks, bug hunts and help to grow plants. Children freely discuss their home life and talk about their pets and outings with their family. Children are developing a good understanding of technology. They competently use the computer and access several programmable toys.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children confidently contribute to the life of the nursery and are warmly greeted by staff on arrival and settle quickly to activities. Children learn about diversity and the world in which they live through well planned activities and some toys and resources. Children celebrate different festivals. They have fun making Chinese dragons and dancing to music and organise plays for Easter, looking at children from around the world. Attractive displays reflect different cultures and religions. Children enjoy weekly Spanish lessons and learn simple words and phrases. They display pictures of My Family, 'Mi Familia', with written words and captions of 'papa' and 'mama'. Children learn about disability and gender through some toys and resources. However, there are few displayed positive images of disability and non-stereotypical gender roles, to further enhance the children's learning. All children access all activities and individual needs are met. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff manage the children's behaviour well. They provide plenty of interesting activities, ensuring that children are kept busy and contented, not bored or frustrated. Staff use consistent praise and encouragement to reinforce good behaviour. A star reward system is also used where all children receive a 'well done' star to take home.

Parents are welcomed into the nursery at any time and parental involvement is very much encouraged. Information is shared informally through daily discussion and during induction. Parents receive written letters and information packs that include statements on policies and procedures. Parents are encouraged to contribute to specific activities and become involved when celebrating festivals and at events such as 'sports day'. Displayed information in the entrance to the nursery includes photographs of the children playing, current topical activities and new initiatives, such as the Birth to three matters.

The partnership with parents of educational funded children is good. Parents receive written information about future activities and the Foundation Stage. They have access to the children's development reports and formal key-worker meetings enable parents to contribute their ideas and thoughts. Parent evenings are also held regularly.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for by qualified staff who use their skills to promote the children's welfare and development. There are clear, well established and effective recruitment procedures to help protect and safeguard children. Staffing ratios are met at all times and the grouping of children and organisation of activities, ensures children are well supervised. Staff training needs are identified through regular staff meetings and appraisal sessions and staff receive in-house training on many issues and new initiatives. There is a clear management structure and senior staff have specific roles of responsibility.

Space and resources are organised well and good consideration has been given to the suitability of toys and activities to promote a stimulating, welcoming and safe environment for children to learn and play. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place for the effective management of the setting. Written procedures are understood by staff and they promote the care and welfare of all children.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Effective systems are in place for the monitoring of staff performance, and the planning of activities and assessment of the children's progress and development.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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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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 children have access to a broad range of resources and displayed images which reflect diversity

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):

- maximise everyday opportunities to promote the children's emerging mathematical skills with problem solving and calculation.

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