

Allens Croft Children's Centre

Allens Croft Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham, WEST MIDLANDS, B14 6RP

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Inspection date | 14/03/2013 |
| Previous inspection date | 10/07/2007 |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| The quality and standards of the early years provision | This inspection: | 1 |
| | Previous inspection: | 1 |
| How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend | | 1 |
| The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children | | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision | | 1 |

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- The staff have an excellent understanding of promoting children's learning through the delivery of a wide range of interesting and challenging experiences that support their development consistently well.
- Accurate assessments of children's development and the comprehensive involvement of parents in their children's learning contribute to children making significant progress from their starting points.
- Children are very happy in the nursery due to the highly-effective key person system. As a result, they are self-assured and interact confidently with staff and their peers, and they are extremely well behaved.
- The management team fosters a very strong culture of self-belief, empowering the staff to maintain their professional development through ongoing training. This enhances their skills and knowledge considerably to support all aspects of children's care and learning superbly.
- Children are kept very safe at all times due to the implementation of very rigorous safeguarding procedures, which are shared with parents. Partnership working is highly effective and this ensures children get the support they need throughout their time in the nursery.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in three rooms.
- The inspector conducted a tour of the premises during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with the centre leader, the nursery manager, staff and children.
- The inspector spoke with parents on the day.
- The inspector looked at children's records and a selection of other documentation including questionnaires completed by parents.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of a teaching and learning activity with the deputy manager.

Inspector

Adelaide Griffith

Full Report

Information about the setting

Allen's Croft nursery was registered in 1997 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a purpose built premises within the Children's Centre in the Kings Heath area of Birmingham and is overseen by the board of governors for the Children's Centre. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four rooms and there is a fully enclosed area available for outside play.

The nursery employs 16 members of childcare staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. One member of staff is working towards the Early Years Professional Status qualification.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday for 48 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8am to 5pm for full day care, and from 9am to 12pm and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm for sessional care. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 49 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance children's very good levels of independence even further by supporting them to extend their self-help skills during all types of routine activities, this specifically relates to pouring their own drinks and serving their own food at mealtimes.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The staff have a very good understanding of how children learn and provide a vast range of stimulating activities to promote their development. For instance, they provide interesting activities, such as singing nursery rhymes with lots of action and this enthuses children and they copy what staff do. These groups include children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and staff skilfully bring the singing to life by holding children's hands, at times as they sway back and forth. This means that all children are engaged fully and enjoy the activity. As children aged two to three years join in actions to

songs they learn to repeat words, resulting in very effective promotion of their listening and speaking skills. Children follow instructions correctly, for example, using their fingers while counting and this helps them to learn and say numbers.

'All about me' forms are completed for children aged under two years to inform staff about children's abilities on entry. During the settling-in period joint observations with parents of children aged over two years ensure that they have shared perceptions of children's developmental stage and these are recorded as an initial assessment of children's learning. Subsequent termly assessments indicate where children are making very good or rapid progress, for example, when they move to a higher developmental band within a short period of time. The staff carry out observations and track children's development frequently, identifying that they are making consistently very good progress. For example, they use a highly innovative method, such as rating skills to link children's well-being to their learning as this reflects children's capacity for engaging in activities. This is evident in children who are shy and have difficulty in speaking and relating comfortably to peers when they first attend. Within short periods these children make rapid progress in their abilities to count, make marks and their communication with staff and other children. Staff have excellent understanding of using information gained from observations to set targets and to plan for children's individual learning. For example, they use information technology with children who have highly developed skills in this area and also use the same media to support speaking for children who need additional support. This encourages children to point at images and to repeat words, resulting in children's consistently high achievements. Parents have frequent opportunities to contribute to the planning and to children's progress records by sharing what children do at home. They continue with activities at home following discussions with the staff, for instance, to support children with reading to ensure their language skills develop well.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported particularly well. The highly-experienced staff follow the guidance from speech and language professionals rigorously. As a result, children's language skills improve to the extent that the contribution from external agencies is no longer required. Staff expertly deliver dual-language story sessions to pre-school children who enjoy stories in English and community languages. The passion shown by staff as they animatedly include actions to support the reading of stories, triggers children's imagination as they listen with rapt attention. Therefore, children are engrossed and maintain concentration because such activities promote their listening skills superbly. In turn, this promotes the language skills of all children, including those who speak English as an additional language. They make extremely good progress in their abilities to speak English and this prepares them well for their next stage in learning at school. Even children who speak English as their first language are learning to count in Punjabi and this helps them to gain a good awareness of diversity in the world around them.

Staff are highly competent in delivering activities. For example, they use interactive white boards with a wide range of media to provide challenge for children to locate their own image in moving patterns. Their high expectations of children is rewarded by the persistence shown by children as they keep on checking the screen. Accordingly, children develop skills in using technology in a fun way. Children remain engrossed as staff talk and ask them to identify pictures of themselves within blurred patterns. Staff frequently

ask open-ended questions, such as, 'Can you find yourself?' As a result, children are effectively supported to think critically and they develop problem solving skills as they keep on trying until they succeed. Children's stories that are displayed in the nursery show that they are consistently gaining skills in all seven areas of learning. The vast range of exciting resources provide ample stimulation for children's exploratory skills as they move around freely in the nursery. They frequently experiment during play, for example, by balancing blocks and making a wide range of structures as they explore their environment. The interesting variety of learning experiences and the highly skilled teaching methods support all children, including those with additional needs, to make consistently very good or rapid progress towards the early learning goals.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The highly-effective key person system helps children to settle easily in the nursery. The settling-in period is tailored to children's needs and they have ample time to form relationships with staff during this initial phase. Consequently, children feel extremely secure and form very strong bonds and attachments. Key persons know their children very well and work extremely closely with parents to promote children's care and well-being. For example, staff follow the care plan they have devised with parents. This ensures that they rigorously attend to babies' need to sleep according to their individual patterns and not to fit in with the routine of the nursery. They meticulously check sleeping children at regular intervals and increase the frequency of checks if they are unwell. This means that expert practice is in place to give utmost priority to children's good health and well-being. Staff discuss transitions with parents before children move into new rooms. They ensure children always move with a 'buddy' and key persons spend time with children in the different rooms before they move up permanently. Consequently, children are fully at ease in new groups, resulting in stress-free transitions within the nursery and this contributes superbly to their abilities to form new relationships.

Pre-school children and toddlers enjoy many opportunities to play in the fresh air as they move freely between care rooms and the outside space. As a result, they learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies and how this contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Children's understanding of healthy choices is thoroughly reinforced through the provision of balanced meals, fresh fruit and frequent drinks during the day. All toddlers are encouraged to feed themselves at mealtimes by using child-size cutlery that promotes their independence very well. After eating, all children, including those in pre-school, take their used plates to a central point and scrape uneaten food into containers for disposal. This results in consistently good promotion of self-help skills. However, staff pour all drinks at mealtimes and they serve children with the two courses of main meal and dessert. Therefore, children's already good levels independence are not fully extended at this time.

Children are very self-assured and demonstrate high levels of self-control as they play with peers, for example, by playing happily and taking turns spontaneously. They confidently initiate conversation with staff who praise them frequently for joining in play activities. As a result, children are extremely well behaved. They demonstrate very good understanding dangers, explaining the likelihood of hurting themselves if they attempt to balance on bars

attached to the wall. This means that children are able to keep themselves safe in the environment. The staff are exceptionally good role models who talk to children gently and politely. This is reflected in children's interaction with others as they treat peers with respect. A high adult-to-child ratio and the effective deployment of staff ensure children are consistently well supervised, including when using the bathroom. Staff consistently discuss and agree with parents the best methods to support children's skills, such as, the confidence of children with additional needs. For instance, they have listened carefully to parents and now provide more opportunities for children to make decisions, including where they sit. As a result, children learn to take responsibility for their actions and their well-being is promoted exceptionally well.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The arrangements for safeguarding children are outstanding. Each term the proactive management team delivers a refresher training session relating to safeguarding procedures to all staff. As a result, staff's knowledge is continuously updated and they are confident about the procedures to be followed if they have concerns about children in their care. This means that children are kept very safe in the nursery. Extremely rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that staff who work with children are suitable do so and all candidates are vetted before appointment. A thoroughly effective ongoing procedure is in place to check frequently that staff remain suitable to be in contact with children. This means that there is a very strong commitment to protecting children.

The deputy manager leads on learning and development, taking responsibility for the staff's practice. She frequently monitors the delivery of activities and gives clear guidance on where improvements can be made. For instance, suggestions include how staff can check the environment to ensure this does not detract from the activity. A well-established method ensures that the progress check at age two years is rigorously implemented. As children turn two years parents are invited to make an active contribution, for instance, by sharing what children do at home and where support is required. A copy of each assessment is provided for parents to share with health professionals. Therefore, parents are fully involved in their children's assessment to identify where early intervention is required to provide additional support to raise children's achievement levels.

A well-established programme empowers staff to shape their professional development through supervision sessions. For instance, they are encouraged to indicate training that is likely to enhance their knowledge and skills to support children's care and learning more effectively. Opportunities to fill a variety of roles help the staff to develop their expertise in specific areas. For example, two members of staff are specifically trained in the promotion of speech and language development. This supports children in making significant progress. Performance management is used very effectively, in line with the local authority guidance, to identify how staff can achieve targets to improve their skills. As a result, the steps taken to raise the performance of the staff benefit the promotion of children's care and development immensely. The management team have a systematic approach to underperformance and build in additional support and training to enable all staff to assist children's care and learning effectively at all times.

Staff, parents and children consistently contribute to the self-evaluation to review the nursery's provision. For example, room staff consistently review the planning and include activities that reflect children's stated preferences to raise the level of their achievements continually. Parents frequently complete questionnaires to express their views of the running of the nursery and their suggestions for improvement are dealt with promptly. For example, the management team have started a sibling project to ensure time is allocated for children to play with their siblings every day they attend the nursery. Consequently, this promotes children's well-being extremely well as the staff mirror what happens naturally at home. The management team have clear targets to improve the nursery with action plans for completion at specified dates.

The highly-effective partnership with parents is based on mutual trust and respect. Parents receive detailed information about the nursery including activities delivered under the Early Years Foundation Stage. At the start of each session a welcoming team of staff stand in the corridor and the foyer to the care rooms to greet parents as they leave their children. This provides opportunities to discuss any occurrences that parents feel they need to share with the staff. As a result, the daily two-way flow of communication is admirably maintained and parents feel extremely reassured when they leave their children in the care of the staff. Regular workshops, for example, on behaviour management, help parents to enhance their knowledge. This strengthens the partnership with parents as they have a shared understanding of the methods that are effective for managing children's behaviour. Parents comment exceedingly favourably on the quality of care and the nurturing environment in which children make consistently very good progress in their learning and development.

The working relationship with other professionals is commendable. The management team ensures clear lines of communication are maintained to meet children's needs. For example, regular meetings are held with external agencies to discuss the development and progress of children with additional needs. They consistently invite external agencies, such as health professionals, to share their expert knowledge with the staff. For instance, all staff are trained to carry out complex procedures to support a child with diabetes. Professionals who use the children's centre contribute actively to children's learning experiences. For instance, they join dual language story time to make an input in German and Chinese. This means that all children are highly valued and communication in their first language is included effectively. The management and staff foster very strong relationships with other early years providers, such as, childminders. They offer support in planning and observational skills to meet children's needs. Accordingly, the continuity in children's care learning is substantially maintained. Overall, the management and staff provide a warm, caring environment in which children make highly significant progress from their starting points.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|---|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. |
| Grade 2 | Good | Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection. |
| Met | | The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration. |
| Not met | | The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration. |

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Unique reference number | 227266 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 904115 |
| Type of provision | |
| Registration category | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Age range of children | 0 - 17 |
| Total number of places | 170 |
| Number of children on roll | 49 |
| Name of provider | The Allens Croft Early Years Foundation |
| Date of previous inspection | 10/07/2007 |
| Telephone number | 0121 675 2835 |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

