

Alexandra Nursery School and Children's Centre

Martha Street, Willows Lane, Bolton, Lancashire, BL3 4AH

Inspection date	16/12/2013
Previous inspection date	08/02/2012

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 provision places the highest priority on the safety of children through both its security measures and its partnership working with parents, other professionals and agencies to support children's welfare.
- The provision has excellent opportunities to develop all aspects of children's learning. Consequently, all children demonstrate rapid progress regardless of their starting points. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.
- The provider and senior staff make meticulous use of information about children's progress, in order to plan targeted approaches for raising the achievement of groups of children and individuals, as well as broader strategies to develop achievement across the whole provision.
- The ways in which the provider motivates, trains and monitors the nursery staff are highly robust and there are similarly high expectations of the staff to maintain an outstanding service for children and their families.
- The provision's provider and staff demonstrate a relentless commitment to looking for further ways they can develop their practice, in order to provide an even greater quality of service for children and families.

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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- A range of information available about the nursery was reviewed, to prepare for the inspection and the inspector examined a selection of documentation on the day of inspection.
- The inspector toured the premises.
- Observations of childcare staff and their interactions with children throughout the day were carried out by the inspector.
- The inspector held a meeting with the provider and spoke with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection.
- A joint observation was completed by the inspector and the provider.

Inspector

Jennifer Kennaugh

Full report

Information about the setting

Alexandra Nursery School and Children's Centre was registered in 2001 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in the Daubhill area of Bolton. The provision operates from the one main room of the over 3's nursery school, which is separated into different areas. All children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

The provision is open each weekday from 7.35am to 6pm for 51 weeks of the year, closing for one week between Christmas and New Year. There are currently 23 children aged from two to four years on roll. The provision offers funded, early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a very large number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are three members of staff who are employed by the daycare to work with the children, of whom two are qualified at level 3. There are three qualified teachers working with the children, including the provider of both the daycare and the maintained nursery school. In addition, there are 10 members of staff qualified to at least level 3 who are employed by the maintained nursery school and who work with the children of both the school and the daycare. Additional staff are employed for administrative and ancillary support and there are 'bank' childcare staff who can be called on for both the daycare provision and the maintained nursery school if needed.

The provision receives support from the local authority and makes regular use of private consultancies.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance the existing excellent routes by which parents are involved in their children's learning through observation and planning, by considering ways in which they can also contribute to ongoing assessment of their children's progress.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make very rapid progress in their learning, as key persons have an exceptional knowledge of how individual children learn. Their progress is often comfortably within that expected for their age range, which is excellent, given the generally low baseline in attainment from where children begin. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress, whatever their starting points, including those entering with low attainment in communication and language development. Children who speak

English as an additional language attain age-appropriate levels of learning rapidly due to highly focused and intensive support through a variety of strategies. Staff make plans for inclusive activities based on their observations of what individual children can do. They use information about children's interests and experiences at home to help motivate them in their learning. Most parents make frequent contributions to observations of their children's learning or experiences at home, either by written means or at the termly meetings with key persons, although there is further scope to enhance this. As a result, staff have a broader range of sources on which to base their planning and assessment of children's progress, so that these have greater precision. Educational programmes have depth and breadth and are very precisely matched to children's ages, stages and resulting needs. For example, children are placed in key groups according to their level of language development, so that targeted approaches can be implemented for groups of children who will benefit together from these. This grouping is reviewed regularly to take account of progress to ensure that children receive correct interventions to develop their communication and language. This is because progress in other areas of learning is underpinned by children's development in this. Observations are made frequently on children's learning and these are compared to expected developmental norms for children's ages. These highly comprehensive assessment form records that track children's progress in detail to enable staff to see if progress is as expected, above, or below for their age and stage. For example, meticulous records of assessment are kept to monitor children's language development, due to the very large number of children attending who are learning two languages, so that any gaps in learning can be quickly identified and addressed. A key strength of the provision is the way in which the provider seeks ways to precisely assess progress that meet the needs of children, rather than using a single assessment method. This means that staff can plan much more accurately due to the detail and volume of information available to them. This contributes to the exceptional progress made by children. Assessments, observations and planning for children's learning is discussed with key persons as part of the staff supervision process and at half termly assessment times, so that there is an additional level of monitoring, to ensure that support for children's learning is rigorous. All children, therefore, receive outstanding preparation for their next steps in learning, including full-time school.

The learning environment is exceptionally rich in opportunities for children to explore their own ideas and the provider structures the sessions, so that children have a substantial length of time between key group times to investigate their interests. This results in children learning to sustain their play, whether it is by play with water or spending long periods of time exploring the extensive resources in the area for creativity and making marks. Staff keep detailed records to show the behaviours children demonstrate, which contribute to learning, such as concentration or asking questions and this is enabled by the organisation of the sessions. Staff are highly skilled at using children's freely chosen play to provide learning opportunities. For example, they plan that when they support children playing in the construction area, they will reinforce their language about position, such as 'in the middle' or 'around' and 'above'. They do this by suggesting that children also make a garage after they build a house, so that they can see if children understand about position, by how they build around the car that staff place on a baseboard. Small group work with children of similar language levels is designed to cover a range of areas of learning, in order to maximise children's progress. In addition, the provider has implemented a clearly defined structure that staff must follow to begin and end these

times, in order to reinforce expectations of behaviour and concentration, so that the learning activity can proceed smoothly. Staff must ensure that they use techniques to develop children's co-ordination as part of small group times. This is also linked to whole setting learning themes, such as raising achievement in numeracy and staff implement strategies, such as children making alternate arm movements as they say numbers out loud while counting. This supports children's physical development as well as helping children who find it easier to learn while moving. Staff plan a dynamic and varied programme of outings to provide first-hand experiences off the premises, such as visits to see plays at local theatres and museums. They take children on seasonal walks around reservoirs to learn about the cycle of changes in the natural world around them. This is followed by providing a rich range of natural resources in the setting to further encourage exploration and language development through discussion. Staff write down children's reflections on their experiences during the walk and help them to compare these with what they originally thought they would find in the woods. This helps children to understand the difference between stories and the real environment.

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

The nursery operates a key person system, in order to support children's emotional welfare and key persons show a consistently detailed knowledge of children, their routines and their preferences. Support for children's emotional well-being is, therefore, excellent, which consequently facilitates children's learning. There are highly comprehensive methods in place to monitor and record children's emotional well-being and involvement in what is happening around them. Staff use this information to monitor how well children are settling and beginning to participate in activities or explore their environment. Children developing a sense of responsibility and independence is a high priority in all areas of the nursery. This is supported by the easy access to a wealth of resources for all areas of learning, so that children can make their own decisions about how to combine these to carry out their ideas. Staff encourage children to pour their own drinks and clear away their leftovers at snack times to further support independence. Mealtimes are exceptionally well used to enable children to learn excellent table manners and a regard for the safety of others, through the implementation of a detailed policy for staff supervising at these times. Staff actively contribute to children's learning about why fruit, water and milk are important parts of a nutritious diet, providing regular opportunities for children to learn about how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Children have excellent opportunities to learn personal hygiene routines through the implementation of very thorough procedures for staff to support this. The nursery provides a dynamic and varied outdoor play environment, which give children excellent opportunities to take reasonable risk in their play, with careful supervision. Children enjoy climbing up slopes and rolling down on boards with wheels, learning how to control their speed and balance. They have ample resources to practise climbing to strengthen their muscles, including a branched horizontal tree trunk and a climbing frame with sides that offer different levels of challenge. Staff provide activities, such as throwing bean bags into different sized buckets, to help children develop their hand-eye control, listening skills and knowledge of words for size, such as 'medium' and 'small'.

Children's welfare is exceptionally well protected by a highly comprehensive range of

policies and parental permissions. For example, the provision has a policy to prevent unauthorised images of children being made on the premises. This is supported by many notices, which clearly state that devices with cameras that are not owned by the provision should not be used by adults to photograph children. At special events for large numbers of children, parents are requested to only make photographs of their own child and no others, to respect the privacy and safety of others. As a result, the provision has a highly robust approach to preventing the creation and misuse of images of children. Robust practical safety measures include the use of door hinge covers on all doors and the use of key codes on internal doors. This helps to prevent unauthorised access to children or children leaving rooms unsupervised. In addition, the main door for the building is controlled by staff, so that only authorised persons can enter or exit through these independently, which further enhances the security of children. Staff deployment is observed to be highly effective in supporting children's welfare and learning, both indoors and outside. For example, key persons are deployed with their key children for defined periods of time at the start and end of sessions, to facilitate attachment and learning through planned activities in key groups. Behaviour is very good, as the provider and all staff consistently use the behaviour management procedures and policy, so that children know what is expected of them. Simple rules are displayed clearly to show any children, who are learning how to manage their feelings and behaviour, what they should be doing to be successful. Parents are given highly detailed information, once their child has a place at the provision, in order to inform them about the policies and procedures implemented that support children's care and learning. This is done by inviting parents to meetings to listen to the provider describe these and by giving parents copies to keep at home. Staff sign that they agree to the policies and procedures and that they have read them. This is so that the provision staff know that they agree to these, in order to support staff in providing an excellent standard of care and learning for their children. Permissions are sought over a range of matters, such as giving medicines prescribed for children and applying sun or nappy creams. This means that children's well-being is supported and that parents' wishes are respected. The provision offers excellent resources for parents to borrow, in order to support them implementing effective routines for children's care at home, such as for bedtimes and tooth-brushing.

Children receive exceptional preparation in terms of independence skills and confidence for their next steps in education. There is excellent support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their parents at times such as this and the provision offers support after transfer to full-time school to provide an outstanding degree of continuity. The provider is also highly conscientious about finding where children move to, if this is not known, in order to pass on information to support safety, well-being and continuity of learning. Highly comprehensive information to support children's good health and well-being is kept from when children join the provision, in order to meet their needs, such as dietary requirements. This is clearly displayed in the kitchen and regularly updated, in order to continue to meet children's needs effectively. The highly detailed care plans for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are regularly reviewed as information is received from parents or other professionals, in order to take account of any changes, to meet their needs. Partnership working with parents when there are concerns over children's well-being is outstanding in the level of support provided for families. This is because the provider makes herself available to listen to parents' concerns

on a day-to-day basis and signposts them to where they can receive support for specific issues.

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

Risk assessments and safety checks are meticulously detailed and reviewed as an ongoing process, so children can safely access rich and varied learning experiences. Staff have a highly comprehensive knowledge of how to report any concerns they may have about a child's welfare due to excellent knowledge of safeguarding procedures. The provider ensures that accurate information about children is held confidentially, such as parental responsibility and custody arrangements. This is to ensure that only authorised persons have access to the premises, in order to bring or collect children. Staff knowledge of safeguarding is checked regularly, in order to keep their knowledge up to date. This means that their understanding of how to deal with any emergencies of this type is exceptionally well supported. All adults who work on the premises are checked and vetted for working with children and staff make regular declarations regarding their ongoing suitability to work with children. This means that all adults employed on the premises have had rigorous checks to ensure that they are highly suitable for their role in a childcare setting. All documentation related to statutory requirements is completed to a meticulous standard to support the safe and effective running of the provision. For example, parents can choose from a range of options for the intended use of photographs of their child, in order to meet any legal or personal privacy needs. The provision's highly comprehensive policies and procedures underpin an outstanding level of care and learning for all children in the nursery, when combined with the provider's continual drive to review these. This means that policies and procedures are always being enhanced to better support children's learning and care. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to carry out their roles and responsibilities. This is because these are clearly defined and frequently reviewed with them, in order to continually emphasise the very high expectations for their practice.

Procedures for recruitment, induction and staff performance management are highly rigorous, in order to employ staff who strengthen the team. The provider is committed to broadening the staff's professional knowledge, including supporting them to obtain higher qualifications whenever possible or simply providing information. For example, after each individual supervision meeting, staff are given articles to read about different early educational approaches. This is in order to give them a deeper understanding of how the provision's ethos is created and support their development of skills. As a result, the provision has a highly dynamic and motivated staff team to maintain outstanding care and learning for children. The appraisal and supervision process is exceptionally rigorous, so that staff receive precise and frequent feedback, in order to enhance their practice. Staff plan educational programmes based on the needs and experiences of individual children, which provide precise and challenging learning opportunities to further their progress. A key strength of the provision is the use of information about children's progress to implement targeted strategies to raise achievement on both a whole-setting basis and for groups of children or individuals. For example, children's learning about number and language related to size has been identified as an area for development for the whole

provision. This is due to the provider analysing the initial assessments of children as they join, which show that this is often below age-expected attainment. Strategies have, therefore, been put in place as soon as children join, so that early intervention can help to narrow the gap in learning. There are multiple systems in place to monitor the quality and consistency of observations, planning and assessment of children's learning. The quality of staff teaching is monitored through daily observation by the provider and teachers, along with regular formal observations by the provider as part of the staff performance management process. As a result, the management's support of children's learning is outstanding throughout the provision because all aspects of staff practice are robustly evaluated to ensure they deliver the exceptional standards expected.

Partnership working is given utmost priority to protect children's well-being and maximise their opportunities to learn. The provider and staff work endlessly to ensure that all children receive the help and support they need in and out of the provision. This ensures that the provision plays an exemplary role in multi-agency working, to ensure that all children and families receive the support they need. Parents' and children's views are constantly sought, in order to tailor the provision to the needs of children and families. The provision continually examines the ways in which it engages with parents, to ensure that this supports partnership. For example, the provider evaluates how to best set up a forum for parents to play a role in reviewing and enhancing how information is presented to them to improve accessibility of this. Self-evaluation is relentless because the provider and staff work continuously to enhance the provision's support for children's learning and welfare. The provider makes regular focused checks on different areas and aspects of the provision to ensure that very high standards are maintained, including using private consultancies annually to provide an impartial, external viewpoint. Views from other professionals, agencies and settings are also used continually to supplement this. As a result, the nursery provides outstanding early years care and learning for all children attending, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

Met

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	959878
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	943941
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	23
Name of provider	Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Date of previous inspection	08/02/2012
Telephone number	01204 332 678

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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.

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