



St Andrew's School Bedford

a strikingly different place to learn

OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT FOR EARLY YEARS PROVISION

Unique Reference Number	EY239852
Inspection Date	21/04/2008
Inspector	Diane Mary O'Neill
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Type of inspection	Nursery Education

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 provider must give a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must give a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service. (The Day Care and Childminding (inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 No 2300 Regulation 5 and 6).

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 NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Andrew's School opened in 1896. It is an independent day school situated in the centre of Bedford. Children attend from both the town and surrounding area. The nursery and reception classes are located within Walmsley House, a large Victorian house and coach house, which has an enclosed area for outdoor play. There are approximately 296 children attending the school, aged between three and sixteen years. The school is open five days a week, 35 weeks a year from 08.30 to 15.15 for the Nursery and Reception classes, 08.00 to 08.30 for breakfast club and 15.15 to 18.00 for after school club for the whole school.

24 children receive nursery education funding. The nursery and reception classes currently support a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The school employs eight members of staff working with the nursery and reception children, plus some specialist teachers. All of the staff either hold or are working towards suitable early year's qualifications or specialist teaching qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are purposefully engaged and highly motivated by the extensive range of stimulating, practical activities on offer in both the nursery and reception class. These relate exceptionally well to the individual learning needs of the children and support their learning across the Foundation Stage. Staff embrace a wide variety of teaching and learning concepts which enables them to enrich all children's learning and experiences. They plan and organise activities and resources which motivate children and assist them in their learning. They have excellent opportunities to further challenge their learning which help them progress within the early learning goals. There is an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated play which helps to successfully achieve this.

Some planning is based on topics that the children will be covering. Staff ensure that all planning is well balanced across the six areas of learning and is positively linked to the stepping stones. Assessment is based upon meaningful observations which are then recorded on children's records of progress charts. Staff use all information gained from planned and informal observations to consider the next steps in children's learning and use these as an aid to future planning.

Children arrive with gusto and excitement and readily seek out their friends, members of staff and activities with which to play. Children are offered inspiring play situated both inside and outside which provides them excellent opportunities to develop in all areas of their learning. For example, as mark-making, physical skills, creative, being self-sufficient and incorporating their ideas. For example, a label for the mud play was designed by a child who proudly told their peers about it. Children are given excellent guidance and encouragement to begin writing their names on their work. For example, writing their name on flower pots for an activity for growing sunflower seeds. Children have great opportunities to access books both for themselves and during more organised story telling. Children confidently answer their names when called at registration time, be it their first name or surname only. Some children are able to recognise letters and link them to their name or everyday objects. Staff know the children exceedingly well and know when to step back and let children take over an activity, creating a realistic balance between adult-led and child-initiated play. For example, the children enjoy being involved in a role play situation of running a restaurant. Some of the children pretend to be waitresses and serve the customers, write out their orders and take telephone bookings, while others pretended to cook the food and serve it to the customers. This involves lots of excellent conversation and working together between the children as they play out their roles. Through this activity the children are beginning to understand how writing can be used in everyday situations.

Staff ensure children have extensive opportunities to learn through play both inside and outside. They have excellent opportunities in their day to day play and conversations to use maths. For example, the children confidently count wooden spindles as they match them into the correct section relating to the order of numbers,

this helps them to learn about sequencing. They confidently count bricks when building as well as looking at different shapes and sizes. Both the nursery and reception class have an informative array of posters, signs and displays with numbers around the rooms as well as photographs showing the children using mathematical concepts. Children are highly imaginative as they create their own role play, such as pretending to use the zebra crossing when playing outside and knowing not to cross this when the red toy traffic light is showing. Children have many opportunities to discover and explore textures. For example, they enjoy cooking, playing with sand, mud and planting seeds, making flowers and then putting them in pots with clay to make them sturdy for the role play area of a garden centre. Staff proudly display children's achievements either in collage form, displays of their art work or photographs.

Exceptional emphasis is given to opportunities to promote physical development. For example, children access the outside play area where they can ride bikes and toy cars, throw and catch balls and run around and develop an awareness of space. Staff provide some mark-making tools such as chinks, opportunities to dig and discover such as when playing in the sand and water play. The planting of seeds and bulbs enables children to learn about the growing of plants. Overall, children make excellent progress in their learning and achieve well given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. This accomplished partnership contributes significantly to children's sense of belonging, security and well-being. Parents are given an extremely warm welcome by the staff into both the nursery and reception class. Staff are on hand to discuss any issues and readily share information. For example, knowing how a child may be feeling that day helps staff to adjust any activities to better assist them. Parents are invited to regular parents' evenings where there is the opportunity to formally exchange information about their child's progress and achievements. There are equally excellent opportunities for parents to view observations and make their comments which assist the staff with further developing and challenge or adjusting to assist children's learning. Informative notice boards within the entrance areas give clear information. This helps parents to be kept up to date about the Foundation Stage curriculum and other activities and learning opportunities which are available to their children. By having this information it gives the parents an understanding of how their child will make progress and through the newsletters and information boards how they can positively continue to support their children's learning at home.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff ensure that through extremely well-planned activities, teaching children about respect for each other, learning about their world and the diversity in this area of their learning is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are outstanding. The day to day management of both the nursery and reception is excellent. The staff team is totally committed and dedicated with staff members who are highly motivated to

greatly enhance children's learning opportunities. Through their extensive knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and commitment to training they are able to promote a cohesive learning programme for all children under the age of five years. The nursery and reception class continue to revise and perfect their education programme. This is achieved through regular staff meetings and positively evaluating their strengths and weaknesses as well as looking at planning and assessment to ensure they effectively meet the needs of all the children.

All class rooms are extremely well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is set out in an exceptionally inviting manner for the children. Therefore they obtain the maximum enjoyment and play opportunities that will purposefully enhance all areas of their development and learning. Children arrive with gusto and enthusiasm and are excited to participate in the school lifestyle and confidently move around the play areas happily talking to staff and their peers. Staff are exceptionally dynamic, dedicated and enthusiastic working very effectively as a team, moving with the flow of the children where they can actively involve themselves in the children's play. They demonstrate a true affinity with children.

Overall the provision meets the needs of all the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were no recommendations raised but a point for consideration was that in order to continue to maintain the high standards achieved, consider how to further monitor and ensure all aspects of the Foundation Stage are covered each year, enabling all children access to the full curriculum. The staff team have a rolling programme of looking at all their teaching elements and evaluate these on a regular basis to ensure they are continually meeting the children's needs to a high and manageable standard.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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*Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2473) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk*