

Arnold Lodge School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY310229
Inspection date	27 June 2008
Inspector	Lucy Showell
Setting Address	17 Kenilworth Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5TW
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Newman Schools Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full Day 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Arnold Lodge School is an independent day school offering education and care to children aged three to thirteen years. The school was founded in 1846 and is based in converted Victorian premises and some purpose built modern buildings close to the centre of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. Children attend from a wide catchment area including near-by towns and surrounding rural areas. All children have access to secure outdoor play areas.

The kindergarten and two reception classes make up the provision for the Foundation Stage. There are currently 76 children attending this provision, most of whom receive funding for early education. Children are able to attend kindergarten for a variety of sessions and full days from 08.30 to 15.30. A two course freshly prepared lunch is available daily.

Before and after school and holiday care is also provided for up to 50 children operating from 08.00 to 18.00. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are 10 staff employed in the kindergarten and reception classes. All staff have considerable experience working with early years and hold appropriate qualifications. The out of school

provision is staffed by a co-ordinator, who is working towards an early years degree, an assistant and additional staff from within the school. They exceed the 50% qualified staff requirement. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's overall health and welfare is promoted through the effectively implemented policies. For example, medication and sickness procedures are clearly understood by staff and carried out appropriately. Children benefit through a well-maintained environment. The premises and equipment are in good condition of cleanliness and redecoration. Children are encouraged to understand and learn about the importance of personal hygiene through discussions, the daily routines and independence in their personal care. They enjoy good health and a healthy lifestyle through good hygiene procedures which protects them from the spread of infection.

Children have their health and dietary needs met because individual requirements are recorded by parents on the registration forms and this information is used when preparing meals, snacks and cooking activities. Children make healthy choices from the excellent variety of nutritious foods provided. Fresh produce such as vegetables and fruits are offered daily at snack times, and water, fresh juices and milk are easily accessible. Delicious smelling and well presented meals, such as salad selections and roast dinners, are served to the children who are supported by staff at sociable meal times.

All children are making good progress in their physical development. There are plenty of rich opportunities through well-planned and well-resourced indoor and outdoor activities. They thoroughly enjoy ring games and action songs making lots of noise and clapping each other in appreciation. Children are encouraged to use a wide range of small equipment during free and focussed creative activities. They use scissors and glue to make collages, squash play dough and use rollers and cutters to make recognisable shapes, build with construction and draw on paper with various pens and pencils.

Children enjoy free access to the innovative outside area, where the introduction and good use of planting areas and appreciation of children's brightly coloured murals enable them to benefit from fresh air. Learning is stimulated across the curriculum as the outdoors is used as an extended classroom where children can develop their play ideas by bringing 'indoor' equipment outside. They access the role play area for imaginary play, pour and scoop in the sand and water trays and choose from a huge selection of construction, balls, bean bags and hoops. Children develop co-ordination and spatial awareness as they pedal and steer on bikes and scooters, develop ball skills and enjoy running around.

Inside children use the small apparatus in the hall to increase control and co-ordination. They learn to share space well and dance to music in varied ways as they enjoy a wide range of music. They learn to appreciate quiet times and relaxing during 'stilling time' when they take time to concentrate on happy times and share this in quiet discussion with others.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's welfare is effectively promoted through the staff's good knowledge and proactive skills with regard to safety. Staffing is arranged to ensure good adult:child ratios are maintained at all times and possible hazards are minimised through effective risk assessments and daily safety checks.

Children enjoy a welcoming environment which facilitates free movement and well spread out activities. Space is used effectively and children independently access resources which are suitable for their ages and developmental stages and comply with British Safety Standards. Children learn about their own and others safety through involvement in safety issues and show consideration for others' safety as they set up and tidy away after themselves.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. Effective safety practices, good supervision and well-organised operational procedures safeguard children. They are protected from harm through the staff's good knowledge of child protection issues. Staff answer scenario questions confidently which demonstrates clear understanding of their role in child protection and of the procedures to follow if there are concerns regarding a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's play opportunities are promoted through the good range of toys and resources and the effective use of space. For example, children set up various activities and games inside and in the garden. The equipment is rotated to maintain interest and to ensure the activities are suitable for all children who attend.

Children's individual needs are met through fun activities which are planned to cover all areas of development and individual interests. Children share ideas with staff about activities and show pride as they create pictures for displays or to take home. Children's confidence and self-esteem is encouraged through receiving praise from their peers and adults at the provision. They enjoy taking turns and sharing favourite equipment and games and develop independence through choosing and carrying out activities on their own or with peers.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Their mission statement clearly underpins their ethos and is consistently demonstrated in staff's very enthusiastic approach to their work. There is an abundance of praise and encouragement for the children and a valued interest in individual achievements. Staff's expert knowledge of the Foundation Stage is clearly demonstrated within the children's individual observations, assessment and planning. This is extended throughout the early years department and the observations by staff and parents are used to substantially assess individual children and significant opportunities, which focus on the learning intentions, are provided for all children to develop to their full potential.

Stimulating experiences enable children to initiate many aspects of their own learning as they lead activities and share ideas with each other. For example, children in the reception class have created a beautiful display of colourful detailed patterns inspired by the clothing and colours in the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. All children show a keen interest in activities which are individually adapted in line with appropriate level of challenge based on each child's

capabilities and starting points. They thrive to succeed and are proud to share their achievements with their parents and show their creations to others. Their learning is particularly enhanced by the free flow play on offer at set times through the day and their open access to resources. Children often take equipment into other rooms or outside to extend their learning as they collect additional items to intermingle with their chosen play.

Children develop confidence and strong sense of self as they share experiences with the group. For example, a child stands in front of the group for a 'show and tell' session, listening intently to peers as they ask questions effectively about the books and artefacts shared. They show great interest as they take turns to stand and draw a picture at an easel and others are asked to guess what they think it is. They extend their own learning as they create collages and pictures together during 'free' sessions which link with current themes and show their interest and understanding. Each of the rooms are adorned with wonderful examples of children's work from portraits of themselves, brightly coloured collages and paintings of animals with 'human' faces and upside-down ears to favourite photographs of the children, their friends, families and staff showing what they have done recently at the setting or whilst away.

The print rich environment offers many learning opportunities within familiar surroundings. Samples of their own labels, emergent writing, tracing and stencils are used within creative displays and to indicate areas of interest and captions and quotes from children support knowledge of topics. Children freely access white boards, paper, books and clipboards to mark-make both indoors and outdoors. They enjoy listening to story tapes and reading from 'big books' in large groups and select suitable fact or fiction books to gain information and develop imagination at quiet times in the day. Large story sacks are taken home to share with their parents and include extensive props, dolls and flash cards which parents state 'make the stories come alive' and 'are an excellent way to generate enthusiasm about books.'

Extensive interaction, questioning and mathematical language is used to extend children's understanding of number. They describe their position in the line as they wait for dinner, discuss capacity whilst they pour water and mould sand and count and estimate as they build with construction bricks. During creative activities they are asked how many, what colour and what shape and they use equipment such as rulers and measuring tapes to check and compare the size of bricks, windows and favourite resources outside.

Children learn to respect people's different needs, views, cultures and beliefs through inspiring activities and opportunities. In the role-play area they dress up in traditional dress and costumes to visit the Bazaar, selecting woven baskets to carry tropical fruits and choosing from an array of ethnic jewellery and artefacts. They explore through books and refer to a huge map of the world and to globes as they talk about faraway countries and different foods people eat and clothing worn. They discuss modern and traditional buildings in the local community as they build a village together from construction bricks including houses, schools and shops.

In the art room children investigate varied textures as they draw into coloured rice with their fingers. They weave ribbons, paper and fabrics together taking ideas from the baskets in the role-play area and thread pasta to make jewellery to display on the topic table and to wear during imaginative play. They use a range of media such as potatoes, brushes and cotton buds as they paint Aboriginal art following patterns on boomerangs and prints on artwork. They express themselves as they dance to Indian music in the hall, beat out rhythms on African drums and sit to listen to the sounds from rain sticks. At 'stilling time' they sit quietly holding an object in their hands and closing their eyes to imagine where they might be and then listen intently to those chosen to talk about where they have been in their mind.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Overall, the children's spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is fostered. Children develop a strong sense of belonging within the child-friendly approach of the setting. Their opinions are asked and respected and they are involved with plans and activities within the setting. Children's awareness and understanding of the diverse community is promoted through free access to resources and activities which are carried out to celebrate various festivals and celebrations. All children are welcomed at the setting and provision is in place for caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children are well behaved and show positive awareness of the needs of others and their own needs. They are very aware of 'the rules' and take responsibility of themselves and their surroundings. For example, they take care with equipment and tidy away when asked. They build good relationships with their peers and work harmoniously together setting up games and giving and receiving support.

Children's care is promoted well through the staff's valuable relationship with the parents. There is a good system of communication and staff are very approachable and friendly with the parents. Information is shared through daily verbal feedback and a parent pack is available which includes relevant policies and procedures.

Partnership with parents and carers of children receiving funding for nursery education is outstanding. Children benefit through the staffs highly valuable and professional relationships with parents. Parents are provided with useful information about the setting and its provision such as a detailed pack which clearly outlines the aims and ethos of the education provision. They are keenly encouraged to share what they know about their child through completing an entry profile and the information is used substantially within the planning of opportunities.

Parents and carers are actively involved in their children's learning. Extensive questionnaires are completed by parents and the responses are significantly evaluated to ensure requirements are met and opinions listened to, respected and acted upon. Parents are extremely happy with the staff and feel they are all friendly, enthusiastic, approachable and very knowledgeable. They are invited to regular appointments to applaud their children's achievements and progress using the individual child profiles and attend curriculum afternoons where they join in fun activities with their children and show their skills and knowledge to extend and challenge children's development. Requested items from home are shared to link with current topics, they join in festivals, celebrations and trips and openly volunteer to come into the setting to carry out activities to facilitate their children's learning. For example, a parent recently came in as part of the faraway countries topic. He spoke to the children about Australia and the surfing culture, showed them surf boards and wet suits and used a skate board to demonstrate the motion of being on the water.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

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

Children's welfare is actively promoted through the appropriate written information such as policies and procedures for the school which are being reviewed and updated to incorporate systems within the out of school provision. Children's individual needs are met through the

good relationships built up between children, staff and parents. Parents' opinions are sort which enables staff's awareness of requirements and preferences and supports continuity of care.

Children learn through the staff's appropriate knowledge of child development and the staff deployment and adult:child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play. Children enjoy initiating experiences, adult-led activities and opportunities for free choice and supported play. This is promoted through the good use of the indoor and outdoor spaces available.

Children benefit through the affective systems for recruitment, appraisal and training of staff. There is a proactive approach with regard to updating training and extending opportunities for developing childcare skills and knowledge. This promotes children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution.

The quality of the leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding.

There are clear links between the nursery and reception classes as they share all relevant information to develop a full understanding of the children and their attainments. The setting has regular meetings with their own Early Years advisors, Foundation Stage co-ordinator, specialist teachers and special educational needs co-ordinator who all support and guide the setting as they provide individual education programmes for the children who attend.

The group constantly assesses their own strengths and weaknesses through successful monitoring and evaluation of practice. They ensure children's progression towards the early learning goals is extensively promoted and that parents are included and views are actively listened to. Local students and school pupils enjoy rich development experiences within the setting as they are welcomed and valued by all staff, parents and children. The setting is committed to developing the care and education of its children and, as stated by the manager, they strive 'to be the place where our children want to be!'

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the setting received one recommendation. They were asked to ensure systems for recording the administration of medication are available at all times. This has been addressed as, although no medication has been given, appropriate documentation is in place.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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):

- continue to review and update the policies and procedures which evidence the efficient and safe management of the provision.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk