



## Arnold Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY310029
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Lesley Sharples
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<b>Registered person</b>	Arnold Schools Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Arnold Kindergarten has been registered since September 2005. It is situated in the south shore area of Blackpool and set within Arnold Junior School. The area is mainly residential with the airport, promenade and beach close by.

Facilities for children comprise of a separate unit joined to the school with six playrooms, two bathroom areas, utility room, office, staffroom and staff facilities. There is an outdoor play area to the front of the building.

Registration is for a total of 50 children aged between 2 to 5 years old. There are currently 53 children on-roll of whom 35 are in receipt of Nursery Education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions throughout the week with 10 of these attending on a full-time basis. Sessions are from 08.00 until 13.00, and 13.00 until 18.00 with full day-care within these times. The Kindergarten is open for 51 weeks of the year and closed only at Christmas and Bank Holidays.

The staff team is led by the manager who is a qualified early years teacher and is supernumerary. There are a total of 8 staff working with children, of whom 5 are fully qualified and 2 are trained to NVQ Level 2 and one is undertaking training in childcare.

Advice, support and training is gained from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a good range of activities which contribute to their good health. Staff ensure that children follow thorough hygiene routine procedures, which are effective in minimising the risk of cross-contamination and infection. Thoughtful and effective examples are set by staff. This means that children learn the importance of hand washing at appropriate times throughout the day and observe staff implementing good practice, such as wearing disposable aprons and gloves when preparing and serving foods as well as tasks in the bathroom. Children are fully supported and encouraged in developing high levels of independence and a great awareness of personal hygiene. Strict procedures are in place in relation to keeping the premises, toys and equipment clean. As a result, the children are able to play in an extremely hygienic environment without risk to their health. Staff adopt the Birth to three matters framework in relation to a 'healthy child'. Children's emotional wellbeing is significantly enhanced via a highly effective key worker system. As a result, the younger children settle well due to the warm and supportive relationship that they develop with staff who meet their individual needs with sensitivity. This secures their emotional wellbeing very well. There is a detailed sick child policy and thorough procedures for staff to follow when administering medication. Records of accidents and medication are shared with parents, however, there is no consent obtained in relation to seeking emergency advice or treatment for children. All staff have been trained in First aid and a first aid pack is taken outdoors when children are playing in case immediate attention is required. This is extremely beneficial to children and gives reassurance to parents.

Children thoroughly enjoy their cooked meals and snacks that are freshly prepared on the premises. Menus are imaginative, varied and nutritious in content and fully displayed for parents. For example, a starter is offered at lunchtime of raw vegetables, such as cucumber and carrot. Children take huge delight in sitting together at meal and snack times. They thoroughly enjoy these social occasions; they talk freely to the staff and their peers and are not rushed. This excellent practice allows children to develop vibrant social skills and their understanding of healthy

eating is enhanced. Staff also provide opportunities to include children in some aspects of preparing snacks, such as helping to make cheese toasties for their afternoon snack, which ably assists in helping children enjoy wider aspects of foods. Staff ensure that children can access appropriate crockery and cutlery in order for them to develop skills in cutting so that they manage their food well. At the beginning of the placement staff gather relevant information from parents in relation to children's likes, dislikes and any other dietary requirements. This means that staff are well able to cater for individual children's needs.

Staff give good consideration to providing a variety and challenging range of physical play activities for all age ranges. Children look forward to physical play both indoors and outside in most weathers. They take great delight in the soft play equipment, climbing and sliding equipment and the wheeled toys outside. Pre-school children also have very good opportunities to extend their physical capabilities during a weekly session with the reception school teacher in the school hall. As a result, children are agile and develop great control over their bodies and this keeps them healthy.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

The premises are warm, well maintained and visually stimulating with colourful displays and examples of the children's art work thoughtfully displayed. Children are very happy and content. This is evident as they enter the setting and say goodbye to their parents. Children are kept safe because staff are vigilant both within the setting and outside. They pay very good attention to risk assessments which are carried out daily and in depth on a regular basis. This includes an assessment of outings planned and the extra requirements for children's safety, such as the type of vehicle used and increased numbers of staff. A comprehensive safety policy is shared with all staff and parents. The premises are kept secure and enhanced with additional safety features for example, a video camera at the entrance and secure entry. This ensures that access is only gained following a member of staff identifying the person and the use of a password if someone else is collecting a child. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to emergency evacuation procedures, they take part in the whole school practices each term as well as their own walk through procedures with the children each month. All staff have been trained in fire safety and are able to provide and maintain a safe environment for children.

Equipment is of a high quality, very well maintained and readily accessible to children. Children are able to self-select resources without risk. Staff ensure that these resources are stored at child level and attract, by careful consideration of storage and presentation. Staff create an environment in which children feel comfortable and they move around all the areas confidently. They are able to sit in small armchairs as well as adult-size seating, such as a settee for stories which are suitable and safe for their purpose. Children learn the importance of looking after toys and activities and they enthusiastically help tidy away at the end of a session, and assist in keeping the nursery tidy and safe.

There is a well written and up-to-date child protection policy, which is made available to parents and staff. The policy is clear and accurate in detail with contact telephone numbers included. All staff have attended child protection training to basic and intermediate level with the manager completing the Designated Senior Person course. Procedures, which include allegations made against a member of staff, are fully understood. As a result the wellbeing of the children is seen to be paramount.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and achieve because practitioners provide an extensive range of challenging and inspiring activities. They benefit from the practitioner's strong understanding and implementation of early years guidance, the Birth to three matters framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Children experience good elements within their day to meet their individual needs in development and learning so that they progress well. Planning is very thorough, linking to guidance and carefully differentiating between age groups with the role of the practitioner included. This fully ensures that maximum benefit is gained from the provision of activities for children. There is an excellent balance of adult focussed and self-initiated activities within the planning for all ages. Consequently children move around the setting confidently, which is effectively organised to offer considerable opportunities in differing play areas.

Younger children are competent learners, they are able to use their imagination, be creative and use technology independently. They have a base room as well as mixing with the older children on a daily basis and this widens their play experiences. They particularly enjoy playing with water and demonstrate good thinking skills in problem solving. For example, one child seen filling a tall plastic container using a small watering can, but not managing to lift the weight of water. The task was achieved by filling a small teapot and using that each time until the watering can could be lifted high enough. The key worker system is highly effective as children spend special times with their main carer and become skilful communicators, relating well with others because they feel secure. Children playing independently are listened to, as a result good interaction takes place, as in the child using a computer programme and identifying letters out loud and this being acknowledged by staff. Children benefit from small group activities, such as playing at a table with malleable materials and talking about what they were making with a member of staff. This was also commented upon by a visiting parent who was looking around the nursery for the first time. Abundant and easily accessible books for looking at and listening to stories told, encourage children's enjoyment of the written word and pictures. Further enjoyment is gained in physical activities such as balancing, sliding and using balls keep children's activity levels high and provide good physical stimulation and they respond well to this.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff plan a curriculum which is challenging, purposeful and innovative so that high expectations are placed on

children. It covers all the six areas of learning and indicates the intended outcome in achievement. Active and supportive liaison exists with the two reception teachers within the school who contribute with ideas and resources to the kindergarten. As a result children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff offer a balance of self-initiated and adult focussed activities in the time table resulting from evaluation of past practice and this has positively benefited children's learning experiences. Staff use effective observation and assessment methods, which they feel work well within the setting to help children extend their learning and identify areas for additional input. This is built upon baseline knowledge when children commence and initial contributions from parents. Individual folders are held for each child and contain well written observations with wide sources of evidence to support attainment of skills. For example, photographs of children involved in activities and art work which illustrate an area of learning. The key worker system is highly effective and offers children a real sense of belonging from secure relationships, however, all staff contribute to observations which are recorded as seen and this gives an abundance of information to effectively assess progress along the Stepping Stones. Parents are also invited to contribute to the process, which means that a rounded view of children's individual learning is gained. Staff work hard to create wonderful areas for continuous play to fully attract and motivate children's play. These are changed during the week so that children attending full-time are continuously challenged so that their learning continually progresses. Inventive ways to help children learn, such as bringing in visitors to show mini beasts and special outings to places of interest, widen their experiences and learning methods. Constructive use of training and support are well utilised to enhance the teaching for children from which they fully benefit.

Children are developing a strong understanding of number, letter, shape and colour. They have rich sources of reference within their environment and staff give careful consideration to clear and consistent lettering and numbering. This means that children are surrounded by good examples which reinforces their learning from other means, such as stories, mark-making, games and questioning. Children are learning well about technology, such as story tapes and head phones, push button telephone and cash register, and are confident and adept in using the computer. They are making sense of the world around them, as well as their own communities, through inspiring activities, such as those planned in the current theme of 'homes and shops'. They paint pictures of their own house and are able to include details, such as 'my house has grass at the front'. They play an absorbing game building a house from matching pictures, taking turns with consideration for others and staff continuously extending children's learning by asking questions. They show active interest in books and stories and are confident communicators with their peers and adults. Children thoroughly enjoy vigorous play both indoors and outside. Time is planned for one day a week with the reception teacher specifically for physical development activities. They are enthusiastic in their approach and use of all kinds of resources within the large play zone indoors, such as climbing, balancing and catching, and ride wheeled toys with gusto when outside. Their opportunities to experience high quality play experiences outdoors is limited as this is a weak area of provision. Children are learning skills in their small muscle development using items, such as threading beads, paint brushes, crayons and glue sticks as well as competently managing to put on coats, fastening zips and buttons and putting on their shoes.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children are made to feel very welcome and valued within the setting as they are treated with equal concern and attention by staff. They are learning about other cultures and issues of diversity through their planned play experiences and resources. For example, imaginative play items reflect Chinese culture, such as bowls and a parent will be sharing aspects of the Chinese New Year with them. Children are able to handle and talk about figures which depict types of disabilities and they are able to look at different languages on posters. Staff are good role models who have high expectations of children's behaviour, such as being kind to each other, and they treat children with regard. Staff apply the behaviour management statement using appropriate strategies, such as explanation and understand reasons when physical restraint may be used, but the policy statement does not include recording and informing parents on the day if it is used, consequently this important aspect of practice may not be implemented. Children develop and learn within a positive and nurturing environment where praise and encouragement is freely given. There are different and dynamic means of acknowledging and supporting individual behaviours, such as reward stickers and certificates covering various aspects of the child's day. These range from 'I helped to lay the table' to 'I counted to five', and contribute to helping children learn about all kinds of wanted behaviours. They enjoy undertaking responsibility for different tasks, for example, pouring drinks for others and use good manners with each other. Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered.

Strong relationships are maintained with parents. From the onset they are provided with explicit information about the setting and special arrangements are made to show prospective parents around the kindergarten only when the manager is not committed to teaching. This means that there is little disruption to the care and education of the children attending and yet allows parents to see children at play. Significant and reliable links are forged with the key worker and parent as a result of detailed information gathered including likes and dislikes, so that individual needs are well known and met by the member of staff. Communication and home liaison is a real strength, parents are included in commenting about their child's development and this is held in their child's individual file. They are also invited to parents evenings, are given a daily diary record for the younger children, receive an end of year report and attractive newsletters full of photographs and information. Further to this, they are invited to contribute to 'Arnold Bear's' travels by taking home the pack, which explains the purpose of linking the school bear to home and parents have contributed significantly to this. All policies and procedures are shared with parents as well as individual copies of information displayed on the notice board. These dynamic ways of working with parents encourage beneficial two-way communication so that children spend their time in the setting happily and progress well. Parents speak highly of the provision and are especially pleased with the information they receive on a regular basis.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the setting, space and resources is done very well. This means that staff are able to meet the individual needs of children who are eager to enter the setting and feel comfortable and happy. There is a settled and consistent staff team in place who work well together and fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Recruitment and selection procedures, including job descriptions, are robust with a clear understanding of the requirements for clearing staff. All new staff have induction and a full and informative handbook with attention to detail included, such as the expectations of their dress, and is reflected in the smart appearance of the team who are easily recognisable. There is continuing staff care because appraisals are undertaken each year to which they fully contribute. Training needs are identified and catered for in different ways, by either booking on external courses and workshops or implementing internally using good quality resources. This particularly strong commitment supports and ensures that staff's skills are continually developing; consequently this benefits children in all aspects of their care, education and safety. For example, all staff have received training in fire awareness, child protection and first aid. There is a clear understanding of maintaining correct ratios of staff-children and contingency plans are in place to cover for absences. In addition the manager is supernumerary and undertakes some teaching to allow staff the time for updating children's observation and assessment records, or other aspects of their work.

Leadership and management within the setting is strong. The manager is very well qualified and experienced in teaching in early years and both staff and children benefit greatly from this. There is a comprehensive and thorough operational plan with full aims stated and how these are to be achieved. Regular monthly staff meetings are held and opportunities are taken to reinforce good practice, such as showing a video obtained relating to the Foundation Stage in practice. The manager's clear vision of the continuing quality of child care and nursery education steers the work of the whole team within the setting. Children fully benefit from her enthusiasm and exceptionally high values which inspire the work of staff, alongside her own involvement in planning and teaching. Especially notable is the absorption of advice from external advisors and the evaluation in practice where strengths and weaknesses are identified. There is a very healthy attitude to acknowledging that there are always areas for continuing improvements. Parent's views are actively sought with regard to how well their children are doing and what improvements in learning have taken place, and this ably assists in forward planning for individual children. Documentation is maintained to a high standard. It is very well organised, in good detail, up-to-date and regularly reviewed. There is a professional and dedicated approach to 'getting things right' and reflects the forward thinking of the manager to ensure that the provision for children is high quality.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

### **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.

## **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 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):

- obtain parental consents for all children in relation to emergency advice or treatment
- include the recording of any incidents relating to physical restraint and the requirement to inform parents on the same day within the written statement

### **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):

- enhance the outdoor provision to promote challenging and wider experiences for children.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)