



Halton Lodge and Grange Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303466
Inspection date	21 March 2006
Inspector	Janice Linsdell
Setting Address	The Mobile, Woodside Primary School, Whitchurch Way, Halton Lodge, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 5YP
Telephone number	01928 564031
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Registered person	Halton Lodge & Grange Committe
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Halton Lodge and Grange Pre-School first opened in 1973, but re-registered in March 1997 following a change in registration. The pre-school is run by a committee and operates from a mobile unit within the grounds of Woodside primary school in Runcorn. It opens five days a week during school term times, from 08.55 until 11.25 and 12.25 until 14.55. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 22 children may attend the pre-school at any one time and there are

currently 49 children aged from 2 to 5 years on roll, of whom 39 receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There pre-school employs four staff including the manager, of whom three hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted because staff implement effective health and hygiene procedures to minimise the risk of cross infection. Children are encouraged to learn about good hygiene practices. They learn about the importance of hand washing, as they enthusiastically join in with the 'hand wash' song, in preparation for snack.

Most staff are trained in basic food hygiene and the setting has received a gold award for healthy eating. This enables children to receive a variety of healthy snacks, such as plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables on a daily basis. Children have free access to a water dispenser so they can help themselves to drinks, but they are not always encouraged to take regular drinks, particularly after exercise.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities because staff provide daily opportunities for children to experience fresh air and exercise. They make best use of the outdoor play area, organising resources and games to challenge children and encourage their strength and development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and stimulating environment. They have access to a good range of resources and equipment, which staff ensure are kept safe and in good repair. Although storage space is limited, staff organise resources well so that children can access equipment easily.

Staff are vigilant and show good awareness of the safety needs of children. They provide close supervision, especially when using climbing frame, which ensures children's safety and security. Effective arrangements are in place to keep children safe, such as the procedures for their arrival and departure, daily safety checklists and regular risk assessments. Staff raise children's awareness of their own safety, by reminding them about safety rules and explaining hazards and dangers. However, children wearing jewellery should be discouraged, as this puts them at risk of injury.

Children's safety and welfare is well safeguarded because staff demonstrate secure knowledge of their role in keeping children safe from harm. There are clear and

detailed procedures in place to protect children, and staff have attended a good level of training to enhance their understanding of child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the group and settle quickly into their self-chosen activity. The environment is very stimulating for children, as they freely access an extensive range of good quality resources to support their play and learning. Attractive wall displays around the room help to promote children's self-esteem. Staff value children, and good relationships are clearly evident. They know the children very well and show sensitivity towards their personal circumstances. This enables children to feel secure and well cared for.

Staff ensure children are provided with a wide range of interesting activities and experiences. They introduce activities to children at the beginning of the session and show enthusiasm for what is available. This engages children's interest and encourages excitement in their play.

Children are very involved in fun and purposeful activities. They make plenty of choices during the session and staff encourage them to try things for themselves, which promotes their independence. They enjoy listening to stories and taking part in activities, such as making their own play dough. They are encouraged to use their senses during play, for example, as they smell the fragranced soap and feel the texture of objects.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have a positive approach to learning and eagerly take part in a wide range of well planned activities to encourage progress in all areas of their learning. Children are confident, well behaved and form good relationships with adults and peers. They concentrate well at activities such as free painting and threading. Children have good opportunities to develop self care skills, as they see to their own personal needs and put on their own coats ready for outside play. They learn about their local community, for example, by enjoying visits from the emergency services, the librarian and the school crossing patrol. Children are developing good communication skills, as they confidently speak and listen in groups and as they independently access the well resourced writing area. They enjoy listening to stories and their interest in books is positively encouraged, because staff highlight new books available in the book corner and encourage children to take books home to read.

Children can count competently during play, and some children are learning how to count in French. They are beginning to make comparisons between groups of objects and know which one has more or less items. Children are able to recognise numbers, although some struggle with recognising shape. They show an understanding of simple addition and subtraction, as they join in with counting songs such as 'five little monkeys' and know how many are left. Children are encouraged to explore and investigate in their play. They learn about growing and taking care of plants, and find

out about changes to ingredients as they make their own play dough. Children are learning well about their own and other cultures through a variety of well planned activities, resources, photographs and displays.

Children are developing good coordination, as they move confidently and use the climbing frame to practice their balancing skills. They show good hand-eye coordination for example, using the threading materials and handling tools. They enjoy physical exercise and show excitement during outside play, as they manoeuvre around obstacles. Children's creative skills are developing well. They can express themselves through a range of activities such as free painting, crafts and musical instruments. They use their imagination well as they make good use of the home corner and dressing up clothes.

Staff support children's learning very well. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children develop, by asking relevant and meaningful questions to extend their learning. Staff carefully plan for children's learning as a team, so that children are provided with a wide range of interesting, practical and challenging activities. They use their knowledge of children to adapt activities to suit individual needs. There are some good systems in place to monitor, evaluate and assess children's progress, but arrangements for observing children and evaluating activities effectively are inconsistent.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued and treated with respect. They learn to appreciate their own and other cultures because staff provide a variety of activities, experiences and some good quality resources to promote positive images of diversity. Children with additional needs are very well supported because staff show a commitment to inclusion, and work well with parents and other professionals to promote their care and welfare.

Children are well behaved and have good opportunities to develop their independence skills. Staff model and encourage good behaviour, so that children learn to be polite and respectful to others. They use consistent praise and encouragement to help children feel good about themselves. This enhances children's confidence and encourages them to express their views. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff develop positive relationships with parents and openly discuss issues relating to the children's care and education. There are some systems in place to keep parents informed of events, such as newsletters, notice boards and a detailed prospectus, but arrangements to inform parents about children's educational attainment are limited. Feedback from parents is positive about the friendly and approachable staff, and the good range of activities and equipment available in the session.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff have worked together for several years and show a real commitment to the children in their care. They make sure the session is well organised and well planned, so that children have good opportunities to play, learn and develop. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all staff. The key worker system works well and staff ratios exceed minimum requirements. This means that children receive good quality care and support.

All documentation to promote children's safety and welfare is readily accessible, well organised and accurately maintained. There are effective policies, procedures and guidelines in place to support good childcare practice, which are regularly reviewed, updated and signed by all staff.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Managers act as good role models and show a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Effective procedures are in place to ensure the suitability of staff and the safety of children. Staff have attended an extensive range of courses and have good opportunities for ongoing professional development through regular training. Good links have been established with outside agencies to support staff and enhance children's care and education.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, two issues were identified as areas of improvement, which related to:

the continuous development of staff skills and knowledge in caring for children; and opportunities to encourage children's physical skills.

These issues have been appropriately addressed. Staff continue to show a commitment to attending regular training courses, to keep themselves up-to-date with new childcare initiatives. The climbing frame and various outdoor equipment enables children to practice their climbing, balancing and coordination skills.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- remind children to take regular drinks and help them to become aware of changes to their bodies, particularly after physical exercise.

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):

- improve arrangements for recording regularly observations of children's achievements to enhance individual assessments, and review activities more effectively to evaluate their impact on children's learning
- develop systems to ensure parents are kept fully informed of children's progress in their learning.

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