



Highfield Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY273312
Inspection date 20 April 2006
Inspector Paula Durrant

Setting Address Riverside House, Station Road, Braughing, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG11 2PB

Telephone number

E-mail

Registered person Christine Michelle Raniere

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Highfield Day Nursery is a privately owned provision. It opened in November 2003 and operates from a single storey building in Braughing near Buntingford. A maximum of 32 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:45 to 18:30 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from 3 months to under 4 years on roll. Of these 4 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from Braughing and the surrounding towns and villages. The nursery welcomes children with special educational needs, or those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 5 members of staff. Of these 4 staff members, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment where significant emphasis is given to the frequency of cleansing areas, equipment and furniture used by the children. For example, tables are wiped with antibacterial solution prior to meals being served and toys mouthed by babies are removed from circulation and sterilised before being returned for use.

Children's health care needs are maintained as some staff hold a valid first aid qualification, although expiry of validity is imminent. There are appropriate systems in place to document accidental injury and medication administered and sufficient medical supplies in the first aid box. All parental consents for medication and emergency aid are in place. Although the nursery has a written sick child policy this is not always consistently applied. Some children do not remain excluded from the setting when they present visual symptoms of a communicable disease, such as chicken pox. This means that there is a potential for further sickness as current systems do not support adherence to the appropriate incubation periods in line with environmental health's guidance. Parents are also not advised of the outbreak.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good personal hygiene as they follow the daily routine. They know for example, when to wash their hands, such as prior to eating and after using the toilet facilities. However, they do not fully understand the reasons behind this task as limited emphasis is given to teaching them about germs.

Children receive a nutritious balanced diet which effectively incorporates individual dietary needs in line with parental wishes. All meals are prepared on site from raw ingredients by the nursery owner. The rotation of a summer and winter menu ensures variety and selection of seasonal produce. Children enjoy the foods they are offered and empty their plates quickly. Children remain well-hydrated as they have constant access to drinking water throughout the day. Babies receive milk feeds in line with routine in addition to cooled boiled water to quench their thirst at other times. Toddlers have lidded cups which are replenished periodically and older children independently access a fresh drinking water tap and cups in their base room.

Children have daily access to the garden. Provision of warm clothes and additional footwear, such as 'Wellingtons' means that children can go out to play regardless of the weather conditions. This means children receive regular access to fresh air, to

exert their energy and to develop increased physical control as they climb, ride bicycles and throw and catch balls. All children are able to rest and be active according to their needs. Younger children sleep in line with home-care routines whilst older children have the opportunity to lie down on a mat after lunch.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety and welfare is given due attention in this vigilantly monitored premises. Staff help keep children safe inside and outside because they understand and comply with written health and safety procedures. All necessary precautionary safety measures are in place and risk assessments are undertaken frequently. Access to the premises is actively monitored through the supervision and management of the entrance area. Visitors to the nursery are requested to provide identification and to record their presence on site in the visitors log book.

Children access an extensive range of safe, high quality, well-maintained developmentally age-appropriate resources which are effectively organised in child-height furniture to encourage independent access. Although the nursery have an extensive range of play materials they are limited in their provision of appropriate furniture for young children. For example, babies receive their meals in pushchairs and car seats as there are an insufficient number of high-chairs available. This means that children's welfare is compromised as children are not seated in the appropriate position for digesting food safely.

Although children understand the appropriate code of conduct for the nursery, such as not running inside, tucking their chairs under the table when they get up after meals they do not understand the reasons behind these requests as staff give limited emphasis to explaining the purpose of the direction. For example, when a child threw a ballet shoe across the room they were spoken to about not doing it again but did not develop an awareness of the consequences of their actions, such as it may have hit another child or adult and cause them harm. This means that children are restricted in developing an awareness of how to keep themselves or others safe.

Children's welfare is high-priority in the nursery. Robust recruitment and induction procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience, training and vetting checks. Children remain the primary focus of care in this setting. Staff are vigilant in their practice and are confident in their knowledge of child protection, reporting concerns appropriately to senior staff. Open relationships between home and nursery ensure that children's needs remain the single important factor. The child protection coordinator ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff understand their responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy and make sound progress in learning, leisure and personal

development because practitioners are confident, enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their childcare practice. Significant emphasis is given to settling children and to developing their self-esteem. For example, children are sensitively nurtured through a family centred approach and constantly praised for their achievements. A flexible style to learning and to allowing children the freedom of movement between rooms means that younger children benefit from socialising with older siblings and peers. For example, younger children demonstrate mature physical and social skills. Although staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework they have yet to formalise their written systems and put the guidance into practice.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children are making some progress in learning but this is adversely affected by staff's lack of knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Poor planning systems do not guide staff in the effective delivery of a balanced curriculum. Although children benefit from the daily adult-led sessions, these only cover Maths and French. Limited impromptu learning drawn from the daily routine means that children do not access sufficient breadth of activities to ensure progression through the early learning goals. Assessment systems are highly basic. They do not track children's achievements against the stepping stones and are not used to inform planning or set future targets. This means that children's abilities are very much taken from staff's individual perceptions rather than an appropriate tracking system. Consequently some activities offered are therefore too advanced for the age or ability of the child. For example, although some children have learnt by rote to name different shapes, such as parallelograms, others are left confused. Current practice is that activities do not draw from what children already know and can do.

Although children speak clearly and are confident in expressing their thoughts and ideas they do not always demonstrate respect for adults or others as they consistently persist in interrupting in large group situations. Children enjoy and handle books with confidence. They appreciate that print carries meaning. They benefit from plentiful opportunities to mark make but are restricted in their awareness of linking sounds and letters. Although children are confident with number and with shape they do not problem solve in practical situations.

Children learn about past and present as they talk about events that occurred the day before and at the weekend. They complete the calendar at registration talking about the date, day, time of year and season. Children develop a limited awareness of the wider world. They have poor access to technological equipment and to design with construction media. Children use their imagination in role-play. They have regular opportunities to sing songs but not to play musical instruments

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff who work closely with parents and carers to ensure individual needs are accommodated within the nursery lifestyle. Exceptionally close relationships with staff supports the sharing of information between home and

provision and supports the development of positive levels of self-esteem. For example, children arrive eager to participate in the activities on offer. They separate from their main carers with ease substituting main carers with their key worker. Due to the size of the nursery being small in number children know all staff members. This means that when they move between different areas of the nursery, such as at outside play or meal times they are confident to gain assistance from other team colleagues than that of their main key worker. Children feel a true sense of belonging in this family-orientated nursery facility.

Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and children with special needs are welcomed in the nursery. Practitioners ensure that resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. This means children develop some awareness of diversity within society. Children are generally well behaved. Although children understand the rules and appropriate codes of conduct in the nursery older children do not always adhere to these. For example, during large group times they constantly interrupt and become highly competitive to gain the attention of adults. Staff fail to manage these outbursts effectively. This means children are restricted in developing appropriate social behaviour during group times and are not learning respect for adults or their peers. Although children access resources that reflect positive images they do not develop an awareness of cultures and beliefs as limited emphasis is given to teaching children about the wider world. This means children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not fostered.

Practitioners are welcoming to parental input. Parents value the openness and honesty of staff. This supports the appropriate sharing of information in sensitive situations. Parents are highly complimentary about the level of service provided. They gain some information on the educational curriculum and of their child's progress. Annual consultation meetings provide parents with an opportunity to talk to staff; to observe work completed and to look through their child's development record. This means that there are some mechanisms in place for parents to contribute to their child's achievements. Overall, the partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff who demonstrate a real affinity with children. Recruitment procedures are sound. Most staff hold a recognised childcare qualification and those that are unqualified display exceptional vocational skills in this field. A significant factor since the nurseries last inspection is several changes within the staff team. This has impacted on the opportunities to address previous recommendations made, especially in the nursery education. It has also provided restrictions on training opportunities as staff have been unable to be released to attend external courses due to the need to maintain working adult:child ratios. For example, some staff's first aid qualifications have expired and others are shortly due to expire. The nursery manager has in place a staff training log book, but this is yet to be effectively put in place.

Staff use the nurseries written procedures to guide them in their working roles. They work exceptionally well as a team which ensures children receive good levels of interaction and in having their individual care needs met. A flexible use of space, such as movement between base rooms late morning allows the younger children an early lunch and provides a quiet area for older children away from the hustle and bustle of the kitchen to focus on an adult-led activity.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is inadequate. Staff have limited understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how to plan an appropriate curriculum for young children. Although key staff members have an educational background this is not in Early Years. This leads to the content of the education programme being too highly advanced and does not take account of what children know and can do. Although some planning systems are in place these do not correlate to the stepping stones. Assessment profiles are highly basic and do not provide a mechanism in which to plot or track children's achievements. There is no effective monitoring in place and consequently the nursery are unaware of the weaknesses in the educational provision. This means children's education is adversely affected through a lack of ongoing development and improvement. Overall, the needs of the children in attendance are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last childcare inspection the provider was requested to devise an action plan setting out how required staff training and qualifications will be met. This referred to child protection, food hygiene and early years qualifications. Children are cared for by suitable and experienced adults as staff have attended child protection training, the person preparing meals holds a valid basic food hygiene certificate, there is a qualified first aider and sufficient staff maintain an early years qualification in adherence to the national standards requirements. The provider was also required to ensure a fire blanket is fixed and accessible in the kitchen at all times. Children's safety is promoted as this is now in place. Lastly the provider was required to ensure that a current certificate of public liability insurance is readily available and accessible on the premises, devise a policy for lost children and ensure records of medication contain parental consent acknowledging the dosage given. Children stay safe and healthy as the provider has addressed these issues. Public liability cover is displayed and is valid, a policy for lost children has been written and the procedure for the administration of medication has been revised gaining parental consent prior to medicines being given and recording dosage, time and medication appropriately.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was required to review staff training needs to ensure all staff receive appropriate training for the Foundation Stage, including evaluation and assessment of activities to enable them to plan what children need to learn next to make progress towards the early learning goals; develop the use of observations and assessments for use in planning, to enable children to make progress towards the early learning goals and lastly improve the aspects of the programmes for communication language and literacy and also mathematical development to provide challenges for older and more able children. Limited progress has been made in improving the nursery education as staff have not received any training in the Foundation Stage and current planning and assessment

systems are ineffective.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint relating to Standard 6 (Safety) and Standard 7 (Health and Hygiene). The complaint raised concerns regarding health and safety issues, both inside and outside the premises. Childcare inspectors conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 27 February 2006. Evidence was found to substantiate breach of National Standard 2, Standard 6 and Standard 14. The provider was set nine actions. A satisfactory response has been received to the actions and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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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):

- ensure children understand the reasons behind the hand washing process, this refers to the introduction of germs and the effects they have on their bodies
- ensure compliance to environmental health guidance in relation to communicable diseases advising parents accordingly of outbreaks such as 'Chicken pox'
- ensure children develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe
- ensure sufficient and appropriate equipment is in place for the feeding of young babies, this refers to the use of high-chairs
- improve the outcomes for children under the age of three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'
- ensure staff are consistent in their messages when managing group behaviour, this refers to social skills and respect for adults and peers
- ensure the effective use of systems to monitor the maintenance of qualifications, this refers to staff holding valid first aid certificates

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage
- develop planning to include all areas of learning, ensure that plans provide sufficient detail to guide all staff members in the delivery of an appropriate programme of learning
- establish systems to monitor and progress children's individual learning and development needs and make full use of these records to provide the next steps in children's learning
- ensure the educational programme is suitably monitored addressing areas of weakness to improve the quality of provision.

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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