



Honywood Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203683
Inspection date	10 May 2006
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Warren
Setting Address	Westfield Drive, Coggeshall, Colchester, Essex, CO6 1PZ
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Registered person	Jeffrey Michael Carter
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?

Honywood Pre-School opened in 1984 and operates from one room within a secondary school in the town of Coggeshall, Essex. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:00 and from 13:00 to 15:30, with the exception of Thursday and Friday when it opens from 12:30 to 15:30. The pre-school is open during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 48 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these 36 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school supports children who have special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs nine staff. Three of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications including the manager. Three staff are working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are kept healthy at the pre-school and are encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices, such as playing in the fresh air, choosing healthy drinks and snacks and being aware of their personal hygiene needs. All consent forms are in place for the administration of medication and first aid, all are recorded for a parent to sign. Staff have regular first aid training and the first aid box is kept suitably stocked to deal with the range of minor injuries.

Children's health and safety when playing outside is considered and parents are advised about applying sun cream and supplying a hat in hot weather. Children may use the toilet unaccompanied, or staff are on hand to help if needed. Those in nappies can be changed and their privacy is respected. Children have access to running water and soap but some current hand washing procedures are not effective in helping to prevent the spread of infection.

Children enjoy a substantial and healthy snack mid-session to help boost energy levels. The snack always includes fruit or vegetable choices and something such as bread and butter. The children all enthusiastically help with the preparation and serving of the snack, making a relaxed social occasion as they sit at the tables to enjoy their food. Children have a drink of milk, water or diluted squash, in accordance with their preferences and dietary requirements. All allergies are noted and displayed for staff so that children never receive unsuitable foods. Fresh water is available at all times, and a jug is provided to allow children to help themselves during particularly hot weather. Those children who bring packed lunches are encouraged to eat and enjoy their food, and develop the confidence to be independent.

Children's physical development is promoted both within the playroom and when using the outside area. Additionally, a large hall is available at times for music and movement. Children also have the opportunity to swim in the school pool in the two terms before they begin full time school. The swimming lessons are supervised by familiar staff who are in the water helping the children, and a qualified instructor is on the poolside. Children have a fun and instructive time in the water, learning to move safely and freely, developing the habits that will help them become strong swimmers.

They are able to move freely round the playroom, which is very well set out to provide different areas and clearly designated spaces for floor play, creative play and a quiet book area. In the imaginatively resourced garden children have the opportunity to run and move freely, ride an exciting variety of wheeled toys, or climb the mound or slide. They have sand and other activities, such as large scale painting, as the weather and seasons permit. The area is well shaded when the trees are in leaf, but staff are aware of the need for sun cream and hats when it is warm. Equally, in cold weather children are well wrapped up so that they can still benefit from the fresh air.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. As the pre-school playroom is within a school building staff are particularly vigilant when moving the children around, to ensure they stay safe and do not come into contact with unvetted persons. The main entrance door is staffed as children arrive and depart, so children cannot leave the premises unseen. When crossing the road to reach the garden, children follow a safety code and are reminded to use their senses to look and listen carefully for any traffic whilst being escorted across.

Children use appropriate child sized furniture and equipment, specially adapted when needed to accommodate individual needs. The toys and play equipment are well set out and easily accessed by the children, giving them plenty of choice and opportunities to be independent.

The environment is colourful and stimulating and uses displays of children's work to good effect, illustrating some of their topic work and reinforcing letter and numeral recognition.

Children's welfare is of the highest importance; staff are vigilant and are trained to respond to any concerns, referring as needed to the local safeguarding children's board. Information for parents is provided to keep them advised of the group's policies and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy a busy and fun filled session where they are able to take part in a wide range of stimulating and worthwhile activities to promote all round development. There is a purposeful hum of activity reflecting the children's engrossment and concentration as they work at self chosen or adult directed tasks. Younger children are planned for with regard to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and staff are aware that they have different developmental needs, adjusting their expectations accordingly. Their development is recorded and parents are invited to contribute to the record books. Staff observe the children but currently do not routinely note the next steps of learning for all children.

Nursery Education

The Quality of Teaching and Learning is good.

Children benefit from staff's very sound knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the Foundation Stage, including how children learn. They plan and deliver a full range of stimulating activities designed to help children make progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. The activities are chosen to challenge and extend the children's understanding, and are adapted for differing abilities. Activities are hands-on as far as possible, ensuring children are actively engaged and maximising their learning potential. A range of teaching styles makes the day interesting and varied.

The room is very well laid out to make best use of the use of space and offer the widest range of activities possible. As well as the regular staff, a parent rota and students from the secondary school are able to provide extra helping hands, for example, helping children use the computer, at swimming lessons and reading stories or preparing art and craft activities.

Children behave very well in response to consistent management by staff. Very little adverse behaviour occurs and children are confident, independent and secure. Children needing additional help are very well supported, several have one to one help to enable them to make good progress and join in with all activities.

Children are able to communicate and negotiate using language. They can express their ideas, thoughts and feelings and talk freely to one another and to the adults around them as they play and work. The book corner invites children to choose and explore a book, which may be fiction, an information text or specially made book with photographs of pre-school activities. Children are made aware of letter sounds and how these link to form words, they use name cards to recognise their own names and those of their friends. A phonics scheme is used which complements the local primary school's approach. Children have mark making opportunities and some develop good handwriting skills, forming letters well and writing simple words. Their efforts are valued and displayed around the playroom, such as a beautiful and thoughtfully designed invitation to a wedding, given to staff by one of the children.

Children's mathematical development is promoted through everyday routines. They give out cups and count how many children are present, choosing the correct numeral to place on the table. They follow a sequence and become aware of pattern, with excellent visual aids showing the day's activities. Equipment for weighing, measuring and sorting is freely available and provides fun for the children as they try to balance the scale pans. Concepts of volume and capacity are developed through sand and water play as children pour, fill and empty containers. Construction kits introduce and reinforce ideas of shapes and colours, as children choose the most appropriate piece to complete a model, such as with the shape magnets or popoids.

Knowledge and understanding of the world is a strong area and is very well planned for. It includes many first hand opportunities for children to investigate and discover things about the natural and made world, both close to home and further afield. Excellent use is made of the outside area, which is well designed with both hard and

grass areas, spaces for planting and growing, and a digging area for pure delving and exploration. The abundant trees help children understand the sequence of the seasons as they observe the changes. Tadpoles are studied and caterpillars watched as they develop and become butterflies, which are admired and then set free. Children plant potatoes and other vegetables, asking questions and adding comments from their own experience.

Children are able to use a computer to support their learning and become familiar with the equipment and names for all the different parts. A digital camera is available to record day to day as well as more memorable events, and staff use some of these images to create books which are amongst the most popular choices from the book corner as children enjoy recognising familiar faces and items.

Children are made very aware of the local environment as they visit places of interest such as the library, church and playing field, or enjoy a nature walk, collecting specimens to bring back and display. A special outing by train is planned for leavers and a fun and informative day is enjoyed by children and staff alike.

Visitors to the setting talk about their jobs and interests and help the children become familiar with some of the people who they may meet outside, such as a nurse and police officer.

Children are able to enjoy a range of free and guided art and craft activities to explore colour and texture in two and three dimensions. They use paint and collage materials to good effect as well as natural finds such as leaves and twigs. They use all their senses to explore the world around them and activities help them recognise differences and similarities as they compare tastes, smells and sounds. Children like to use the musical instruments and an impromptu band may develop as they choose and play their favourite drum, keyboard or shaker. Role play and dressing up allow children to enact real and imaginary scenarios, and on a smaller scale they use the vehicles and animals to create a world in miniature.

Staff are unfailingly enthusiastic and dedicated; this naturally enthuses the children and boosts their confidence, enabling them to feel secure and at home, learning through play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's details are recorded on the registration forms, to enable staff to offer care and education according to their individual needs. Their likes and dislikes are known, and parents are encouraged to keep staff updated with any changes, such as contact numbers or changes in family circumstances. Children are introduced to ideas of diversity by the celebration of festivals and cultural events throughout the calendar year. Books and resources reflect positive images of families and people from around the world. The setting is fortunate in being part of a community school; students from the secondary school take an active interest in the pre-school and introduce some exciting options for the children to enjoy, such as art and craft activities or an obstacle course to challenge their physical skills. Staff value this contribution and

integrate the older children into the group through paired reading and offering placements for students of child care within the main playroom. The benefits to the children are immense, they gain experience of being with older children and become confident, boosting their self esteem.

Children who need additional help or who have English as an additional language receive individually planned support. Staff work closely with parents and outside professionals to ensure children gain the maximum benefit from their time at the setting. Dual language labels and key vocabulary are provided, along with pictorial cues, and everyone uses a sign language system to aid communication for non or pre-verbal children.

Children's behaviour is excellent. They are happy and secure, and understand the rules for positive behaviour. They respond to staff's high expectations and consistent management and show regard for the feelings of others, for example moving to allow two friends to sit together, and using a timer to plan for taking turns fairly. They enjoy the reward sticker system and are quick to remind staff when they feel they have earned a sticker.

The partnership with parents is highly valued and effective, and seen as key to helping the children make good progress. They are given a prospectus, and newsletters regularly inform them of activities and events. A notice board contains leaflets and brochures about child protection, health issues and general information. Every day, a written sheet is posted outside telling them of the session's activities, as told by the children. Parents become involved in the group through fundraising or helping at sessions, and attending special open days to see what the children do at pre-school. Lots of positive praise from parents is received both verbally and in the form of letters, cards and in one case a lovely poem.

Nursery Education

The partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents are involved in their child's education by being asked to provide information about their child's likes and dislikes, favourite activities and toys. This gives staff an idea of the child's learning styles and whether they are shy or outgoing, confident or in need of reassurance, thereby enabling them to plan accordingly. Parents are able to talk to key workers at any time and are invited to view the records or spend time in the playroom. The developmental records clearly show what children have done, but currently do not show the next stages of learning.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met.

All staff undergo vetting and are checked to ensure that they are suitable to work with

children; rigorous procedures are in place to ensure ongoing suitability. Students and volunteers have clear guidance about their roles and are closely supervised by staff, ensuring children's safety.

The setting is very well organised and the room set out to meet the children's needs extremely well. The resources are accessible as far as possible, with extra storage close by so that if children want a specific item that is not set out they may ask for it. The child centred approach helps children feel at home and become familiar with the routine and day to day patterns. A very favourable adult to child ratio means that children have plenty of one to one attention and are well supported. Staff have a good working knowledge of the National Standards and are continuously reviewing their policies and procedures to keep up to date with changes and developments.

Leadership and Management is good.

Staff have a very strong team focus; all are clear about their roles and responsibilities and support one another in making the sessions run smoothly. They spend most of their time in direct contact with the children, supporting and engaging with them to help them gain from their time at pre-school. Staff training is valued and several staff are undertaking qualification courses. Activities are planned by all staff at regular planning meetings and staff take turns to plan for different areas. At present the activities are evaluated verbally only. The manager monitors the quality of care and education delivered and there are regular appraisals to assess performance and identify training needs.

A strength of the group is the very evident dedication and motivation of staff to provide a very child centred, hands-on style of learning for the children. The relatively small group size allows children time and space to move at their own pace, interacting freely with their friends and the adults around them, this is a positive feature of the organisation and clearly benefits the children as they gain confidence and self esteem.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group was asked to develop a procedure for a lost or uncollected child. This is now in place.

The group was asked to review the book corner to make it more accessible and appealing to children. This has been successfully achieved with the introduction of new seating and a display rack; children now enjoy using the area and looking at a variety of books for pleasure and to find information.

The group was asked to review the child protection policy in line with National Standards requirements This has been done and a new, revised policy is in place including details of action to be taken in the event of an allegation against a staff member.

As a result of actions taken and improvements made, children's care and welfare is enhanced.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report 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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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):

- review hand washing procedures to minimise the risk of spread of infection.

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):

- ensure that activities are evaluated to inform future planning and to help identify the next stages in learning for individual 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