



## Hunsdon Ducklings

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	127950
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 September 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Cheryl Langley
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Porta Cabin, Hunsdon JMI School, Hunsdon, Hertfordshire, SG12 8NT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 841044
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Hunsdon Ducklings
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Hunsdon Ducklings Pre-school opened in 1995 and has sole use of a porta cabin sited in the grounds of Hunsdon JMI school. It is situated in the small village of Hunsdon near Stanstead Abbots, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 12 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 during school term times and in addition offers a Lunch Club on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12.00 to 12.45. The children share access to the school

playground. The setting welcomes children who speak English as a second language or those with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

There are currently 16 children from two to under four years on roll. Of these 13 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attending the group come from the local and surrounding areas.

The pre-school employs two full time staff and one part time staff member. Three of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. One volunteer is working towards a level 2 qualification and one member of staff is working towards an Early Years Foundation Degree. They are currently working towards the Herts Quality Standard. The group receives support from a teacher from Hunsdon JMI School.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. They take part in a broad range of interesting activities and share books which develop their knowledge and understanding in this area. Children know why they need to wash their hands after using the toilet, messy play and before eating. They wear hats and sun cream to protect them from the effects of the sun. All of the required documents and procedures are in place to enable staff to act in the children's best interests if they need medical attention and prevent the spread of infection. Information is shared appropriately with parents to provide consistency in their health care.

Exciting outings and planned activities increase the children's awareness of food and where it comes from. For example, they visit working farms to see how different foods grow or come from animals. They learn the benefits of a healthy diet. Children try new and unusual foods to broaden their experience and maintain a balanced diet. They enjoy cooking activities, such as making different sandwich fillers from around the world. Children eat fresh fruit at snack times and bring healthy foods for 'lunch club'. The staff take account of the wishes of parents and work with them closely to provide food that appeal to the children as well as meeting their dietary needs.

A vast array of resources, planned activities and play equipment enables children to develop and enhance their physical skills. They control their bodies to manoeuvre scooters and sit-on rides in all directions. Regular use of the gym and large climbing equipment enables them to climb over, under and through, co-ordinating and balancing their bodies. More able children competently bat, throw and catch balls with precision. Using hand and eye co-ordination children build with large and small construction materials and use various tools and utensils. For example, to manipulate play dough into different shapes, build connecting bricks to create 'The three bears' house' or make marks with crayons on large rolls of paper. Children have fun in regular music and movement sessions. They use maracas to create different sound effects linked to movement, such as, skipping, running or jumping.

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

The provision is good.

Children's safety is a high priority. Staff carry out regular risk assessments and remove hazards from both the inside and outside areas to keep the children free from harm. Children are able to move around freely and safely in a welcoming environment. They choose their play from a range of good quality developmentally appropriate resources. All of the required policies and procedures are in place to support the children's safety and ensure their welfare is safeguarded and promoted. For example, the required parental consents are in place and staff have sound understanding of child protection issues. There is a designated member of staff responsible for this and training is updated regularly.

Children learn how to protect themselves. Interesting topics and activities reinforce their understanding of safety. For example, they enjoy visits from the local road safety officer or police officer and outings to the fire station. Children adhere to rules to keep themselves and others safe, such as not running inside and sitting correctly on their chairs. They are aware of the dangers of fire and take part in regular fire drills. Staff promote the children's awareness of safety by taking the opportunity to link discussion about keeping safe to current topics and themes. They talk about the dangers 'Goldilocks' may have faced walking in the forest and into a stranger's house without her parents.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a variety of play and activities which are planned and organised by the staff. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is currently being incorporated in the planning for children under three years of age. Children receive additional adult guidance to give them extra support when it is needed. The staff set them challenges along with a range of stimulating play to aid their development. For example, children soon become confident to speak in large or small groups, follow simple instructions and feel settled without parents or carers and able to try new experiences. Most of the children are keen to sing nursery rhymes solo in front of the whole group, completing the actions to the song whilst they sing.

Children benefit from the range of activities on offer which develop their knowledge and skills. For example, they use different vocabulary to describe the weather and are aware that it needs to be windy to fly a kite. Children recognise the different colours of the abacus beads or parts of a toy during 'show and tell'. They count in sequence during simple songs and rhymes and use mathematical language to name shapes or compare size. Children create different patterns to make collage pictures and match and sequence pictures with games and puzzles.

Children learn about the natural environment. They enjoy a number of outings to working farms and activity centres or local gardens where they feed the animals and collect eggs. Children take part in creative activities linked to topics, for example, they use paint to colour in three chairs, three bears or three bowls of porridge as part of

the 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' themes and stick fur and eyes to make pictures of a bear to share with their parents. Children represent their experiences and feeling through role play. They make porridge for themselves and their friends in the 'three bears house' in the role play corner, or go to the shops with babies in buggies in the outside play area to buy some more food.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children make good progress. They are supported by staff who have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. Plans cover all six areas of learning and there is a good observation and assessment system in place. Both the plans and children's assessments link closely to the stepping stones and early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. The observations are used to inform planning for each individual child's development. More able children's learning is extended. There are effective systems in place to support children with learning and/or physical disabilities. The staff are attentive and interact with the children, talking and listening to them to develop their language and communication skills and extend their thinking.

Children are focussed during play. For example, they concentrate for long periods to mould pink play dough into different shapes. Children narrate imaginary situations during role play using the correct language, actions and gestures to create stories. They choose books to share with peers turning pages correctly and following the pictures. Children listen attentively to stories and are keen to join in with the words and answer questions. They feel confident and comfortable to talk about their experiences using a range of vocabulary to describe what might happen next or what has happened in the past.

Children practise their mark making skills with crayons, pencils and paint. They write for different purposes, for example, in cards for different anniversaries. Children are developing an understanding of sounds and letters. They sound out the first letter of their name and the days of the week. More able children can recognise their name on their name card without prompting and connect two letters to make another sound, such as 'th' for Thursday. Children listen and take turns during discussions. They share their ideas and views with the other children and the staff. Children develop simple counting and calculation skills. They count the abacus beads which represent those present, adding the number of adults to children to find the total number of people in the room. More able children count ten and beyond confidently. They use mathematical language to describe whether the dinosaur's tail and neck are "long" or "short" and more able children correctly identify two "pairs" of glasses.

Children explore changes. They monitor the lifecycle of caterpillars, to be released when they become butterflies in the wildlife garden. They grow sunflowers and observe trees changing through the seasons. Children build and construct using a range of materials of different size and type, some with moveable parts. For example, 'stickle' bricks are used to create cars with moving wheels. Children use technology confidently. They use the computer mouse to select numbers following simple instructions and press buttons to activate lights and sounds on the fire station toys. Children find out about the wider world. They enjoy celebrating different festivals and

taking part in cooking activities to try foods from different cultures.

Children learn different skills in the area of physical development. They take part in team games and use various equipment to move all parts of their bodies. Children use spades and buckets in damp sand to make sand-castles and connect parts to potato heads to create different characters. There are some planned activities and resources which encourage children to use their imaginations and creativity independently. However, this is limited and usually adult led which restricts opportunities for children to express their feelings and ideas through art and design or develop their design making skills.

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

The provision is good.

All children receive a warm welcome and take part in the full range of activities. Their confidence and self-esteem is developed by the staff who give them responsibilities, such as helping out at registration and they compliment children on their accomplishments. This gives the children a sense of belonging which makes them feel secure and relaxed. Children are supported by staff who know the children, their care routines and developmental needs well.

Children are well behaved. They develop good social skills and make positive relationships with the staff and their peers. Children are polite and considerate. They remember to say 'please' and 'thank you', share and take turns and help other children. The staff are good role models and manage behaviour effectively. For example, they offer praise and encouragement and show that they value the children's achievements. They use a calm and sensitive approach to explain to children that their behaviour may have an impact on others. Children have respect for others. They benefit from a meaningful range of activities and resources to promote a positive view of the wider world and increase their awareness of diversity.

There is a strong partnership with parents which supports the care of the children. Settling-in procedures are flexible to meet the individual needs of the children and parents. A comprehensive range of information is gathered both in writing and verbally so that staff can meet each child's requirements and share their care and learning experience with parents. All families are encouraged to be part of the setting and regular parent volunteers join sessions. All of the required parental consents and policies and procedures are in place. However, the complaints procedure has not been updated to include a system to record or share appropriate action regarding a complaint. This is to ensure parents' concerns are respected and acknowledged and the children's welfare fully monitored.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive information about the provision and nursery education on a regular basis. Newsletters and the parent notice board keep them up-to-date with current topics, activities and the routine of the session. Parents are invited to attend consultations if they wish, or social gatherings and may exchange information before and after each session, to share their children's progress and achievements. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning by sharing topic related items or joining in

with sessions. Regular feedback about the provision from parents is encouraged and the staff have received positive and complimentary comments from parents about the care and education provided for their children. At the end of the children's time with Ducklings parents receive a scrap book illustrating their child's accomplishments with photographs and samples of their work as a keepsake and representation of the progress they have made. Procedures are in place so that all necessary information about the children can be shared to promote their welfare and meet their individual needs. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from thorough recruitment and vetting procedures which ensure they are protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. Policies and procedures are in place which allow effective running of the pre-school and to keep the children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Both full time members of staff have a current first aid qualification.

The sessions are organised to ensure children enjoy a mix of planned activities, free-play and small and whole group times. They have access to a good range of high quality resources. Staff monitor the activities and review their practice to ensure children are stimulated and challenged. High ratios of staff are maintained to provide guidance and supervision as is appropriate for each individual child. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The Staff and committee work well as a team. They have regular meetings and all staff working with children join in with planning for the Foundation Stage programme. The curriculum is monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure all six areas of learning are covered. The professional development of the staff is encouraged through regular appraisals and training is updated regularly. The pre-school has very close links with Hunsdon JMI School. Hunsdon Ducklings' children have access to a range of resources within the school, are invited to join the nursery for regular movement and music sessions and attend the nursery prior to moving on. This helps them settle quickly and feel secure and relaxed about the change in their routine.

Children enjoy attending this well organised setting. The staff are enthusiastic and dedicated and continually strive to improve their practice. They have developed positive working relationships and are committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to a number of recommendations to improve the care and education of the children.

To safeguard the children's welfare, staff have updated their training in child protection and are aware of the procedures to follow to protect them if they have any

concerns. Regular risk assessments are conducted both inside and outside to keep the children safe and free from harm. An uncollected and lost children's procedure is in place to ensure staff act in the children's best interests in these circumstances, contacting relevant outside agencies and working in partnership with parents.

The range of activities planned in the areas of physical and creative development provide ample opportunity for children to develop and enhance their physical skills. A variety of creative activities through planned and free-play are available at each session. Children explore sound in music and song through planned music and movement sessions, as well as impromptu singing.

Assessment records give a clear indication of how well the children are progressing and are used to determine the next steps in the individual child's development.

### **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.

## **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):

- implement a system which ensures appropriate and prompt action is taken on any concerns raised and complaints investigated, which includes, notifying complainants of the outcome within 28 days, the correct address and telephone number of the regulator and a record of all complaints with appropriate information which is shared with parents on request.

#### **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):

- provide more opportunities for children to use their imaginations in art and design and to select resources for themselves and work independently, using a wide range of objects, tools and techniques to shape, assemble and join materials.

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)