



## Highfield Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY273312
<b>Inspection date</b>	01 December 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Paula Durrant
<b>Setting Address</b>	Station Road, Braughing, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG11 2PB
<b>Telephone number</b>	
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Christine Michelle Raniere
<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?

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 24 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from Braughing and the surrounding towns and villages. The nursery welcomes all children. They have systems in place to support children with learning disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. Of these, six staff, including the nursery manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group receive support from an early years advisory teacher.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they should have an accident or become ill as practitioners consistently adhere to well structured health and safety procedures drawn from environmental health guidance. For example, the premises are maintained to a good standard of cleanliness, furniture and equipment is constantly cleansed with antibacterial solutions, children who sleep have access to their own bedding and all staff wear protective clothing and gloves when changing nappies or supporting children with toileting needs. All of this good practice ensures cross contamination is effectively minimised. Rigorous adherence to exclusion periods for childhood diseases and the maintenance of staff's first aid qualifications means that children stay healthy and receive appropriate care in the event of a medical emergency. All appropriate records and consents are in place for the documentation of accidental injuries and medication administered. There are sufficient medical supplies in the first aid box.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned daily routines. They know for example, that it is important to wash their hands prior to eating, after using the toilet and when returning from outside play. They understand the reason why they wash their hands as staff consistently introduce conversations about getting clean and germs. Children access tissues independently to wipe their noses and discard of the used tissue appropriately.

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. Rotation of a summer and winter menu ensures variety and selection of seasonal produce. Children enjoy the food 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 their home care 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 fresh drinking water via a designated 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 in order to recuperate their energy levels.

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

The provision is good.

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 use a sufficient range of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate resources which are well organised in child-height furniture to encourage independent access. Staff skilfully explain safe practices, such as the need to pick up items dropped on the floor, so that other children do not fall or hurt themselves and to sit down when eating as there is a potential to choke on undigested food. Children are highly perceptive to the ethos of safety. For example, during an imaginary role play outing to the zoo children knew not to wander off as they may get lost or to place their fingers in the animals cages as the animals may think it is food and bite them. Children have a sound awareness of what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation as fire drills are practised with suitable frequency.

Staff protect children well. Strong 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 well organised and managed 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 good.

Children enjoy and make good progress in learning, leisure and personal development because practitioners are confident, enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their childcare practice. Staff effectively use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance to underpin the foundations of the educational programme for all children. Extended planning for older children, builds on the Foundation Stage curriculum as a supplementary layer, which interlinks positively with children's progression and achievement. Children under two-years are very articulate due to the positive interaction and staff engagement in conversations.

The nursery have recently introduced new planning and assessment systems. They are extremely aware of the emphasis and direction of Early Years Childcare working towards a unified curriculum for under fives in line with the recent Firm Foundations consultation document. Current planning mechanisms which refer to both the 'Birth to three matters' components and the Foundation Stage early learning goals. As yet this is not fully effective as assessment records require greater correlation with planning.

## **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are engaged and motivated by a varied range of stimulating, practical activities related to their needs. They access an extended range of good quality resources, which support their learning across the Foundation Stage. All children are keen to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They listen with considerable levels of concentration to stories and are able to re-tell familiar books. Many children use marks readily to represent their ideas and older children are becoming adept at writing their own names. Children are highly imaginative as they create their own role play. For example, a group of children masterminded an impromptu visit to an imaginary zoo when playing outside in the garden. They are beginning to make sense of the world around them as they celebrate cultural festivals throughout the year and listen and respond to instructions, stories and rhymes in French. Children create three dimensional models, collages and draw pictures many of which are displayed. They are inquisitive, fascinated by how things, such as keyboards work and wonder at the changes they see in the trees as the branches lose their leaves in preparation for winter.

Children work very well together. For example, younger children learn about turn taking and sharing as they play with older children who enjoy explaining the importance of being fair and kind. Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play and respond well to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and some daily routines. Children gain opportunities to develop their physical skills, such as through daily access to the garden and regular music and movement sessions.

Staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and try to build on this information to help children achieve their full potential. Planning systems are superb, appropriately detailed and provide a clear tool to guide staff in the delivery of a balanced curriculum. A flexible approach to the day and a balance between energetic play and quiet spells allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions successfully to encourage children's thinking and language skills. The nursery have in place a system to observe and record children's achievements although these require further development. Staff know the children well and use this information alongside current record keeping systems to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and children with special needs are warmly welcomed in the nursery. Practitioners ensure that the resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others. Children are extremely well behaved, and very polite in response to the consistent expectations of caring practitioners. The manager ensures that a warm welcoming and homely environment is provided, prioritising the welfare of the children in attendance. Children take turns and show concern for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Practitioners are conscientious and welcoming to parental input. There is a wealth of information which is

easily accessible which includes general care and educational literature. 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. Staff encourage parents to actively contribute towards the educational curriculum as they inform them about the topics undertaken and invite children to bring in items from home linked to the current theme. Although parents receive plentiful opportunities to discuss and to share in their child's attainments, such as through informal talks with staff, access to their child's individual assessment profile and formal parents evenings there is currently no formal system for documenting parents contributions and comments within the newly devised assessment profiles. This would enhance current practice and promote a unified two-way system of sharing information between parents and practitioners to support and enhance children's learning and progression.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Robust recruitment procedures underpin the stability of a mature and highly skilled staff team. A vast majority of staff are qualified and all staff gain frequent opportunities through their personal development plans to access short courses. This enhances their knowledge and understanding of current childcare practices. Staff demonstrate a real affinity with children; they respect their feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company.

The nursery are extremely proactive in developing and improving outcomes for young children. Through self-evaluation they identified the need to develop staff's working knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This has been done through continued monitoring and one to one mentoring by senior staff. Planning continues to evolve and provides a secure base to underpin the older children's curriculum. Although planning is sound assessment remains an area for development. Continued revision of organisational structures through self-evaluation will support the maintenance of good quality care and provide a mechanism in which to recognise areas of strength and areas that require address. Greater correlation of planning and assessment profiles will promote a unified and holistic early years education programme where children's level's of ability can be clearly tracked and the information gained used to effectively inform future planning.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff are dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education and have strived to embrace the new inspection outcomes correlating this with their educational curriculum. They have a clear understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum. This promotes very positive outcomes for all children. Although planning and assessment systems are new, staff have really strived to implement them effectively. Planning is sound, sufficiently detailed and draws on what children know and can do and what they need to learn. However, assessment profiles still remain an area for further development. Although staff know the children well and can clearly articulate every child's level of ability current written systems are not clearly definable at a glance. They also do not provide a section for parents to contribute their comments. This is largely due to new structures and the method of recording as staff detail observations in isolation to the stepping stones. Greater cross referencing will ensure a concise and workable

document where levels of attainment can be easily identified for use by staff and parents. The nursery are highly responsive to their areas for improvement. They recognise that planning is yet to be totally effective and will continue to draw from the guidance and from their Early Years Teacher input to monitor and progress their current systems. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last childcare inspection the nursery were required to ensure that children understand the reasons behind the hand washing process, referring to the introduction of germs and the effects they have on their bodies. Children stay healthy as staff frequently talk about the purpose of the hand washing process. This supports a secure understanding by the children that washing hands is a preventative method to eradicate germs and keep them from getting poorly. They were also required to ensure compliance to environmental health's guidance in relation to exclusion periods for childhood diseases and notification to parents to advise of any outbreaks. The nursery have revised their health and hygiene policy to ensure children do not contract infectious diseases and where outbreaks occur parents are notified immediately in order that the outbreak can be contained. They were also required to ensure children develop an awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Children's welfare is paramount as staff skilfully explain safe practices to the children through general play and adult supervision and direction. They were also required to ensure sufficient and appropriate equipment is in place for the feeding of young babies, this referred to use of high-chairs. Babies benefit and stay safe at lunch time as they are seated in a correct position to eat which also supports opportunities for independence. They were also required to improve the outcomes for children under the age of three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'. Younger children benefit in having their care and educational needs met as the group have devised and implemented practical age-appropriate activities linked to a clear learning plan. They were also required to ensure staff are consistent in their messages when managing group behaviour and ensure the effective use of systems to monitor the maintenance of qualification, this referred to valid first aid qualifications. Children's needs come first in this provision. The nursery have revised their daily routine to take account of the length of large group times in order that children are able to sit and listen in line with their age and stage of development. They have also put in place a training log for all staff in order to monitor the validity of qualifications that expire, such as first aid.

At the last education inspection the nursery where required to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage; to develop planning to include all areas of learning and provide sufficient detail to guide all staff in their role; to establish systems to monitor and progress children's individual learning and development needs and make full use of assessment records to plot the next stages in children's learning and to set in place a system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the educational curriculum. Children benefit as staff have developed their knowledge of the curriculum guidance through access to training; networking with other local nursery provisions to share good practice and working closely with the early years advisory services. They have implemented workable planning systems which continue to evolve and develop. Although assessment profiles have been improved and now link to the stepping stones greater unification is required. Currently assessment is based on observation but this is not linked to which area of learning or learning outcome. This means there is a potential for

assessment to sit separately to planning. The nursery have truly strived to improve their practice. They have devised a system which they have complete ownership of and that is reflective of their setting. They continue to work collaboratively with the advisory services and have already evolved a system for monitoring the balance of the curriculum throughout each term.

### **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):

- continue to review and revise the nurseries organisational structures through self-evaluation in order to maintain levels of good quality care and improve where appropriate current systems, such as, further enhancement of the 'Birth to three matters' framework consolidating clear links from planning to assessment profiles.

#### **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):

- continue to develop assessment profiles to ensure a clear, concise workable document that is able to be used by staff and parents, this refers to a simple reference system so that levels of attainment can be easily identified and an area for which parents can contribute their comments.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)