



Heaton Playschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315941
Inspection date	15 January 2007
Inspector	Susan Janet Lee
Setting Address	Guide Headquarters, Opp Markland Hill School, Heaton, Bolton, BL1 6EJ
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Registered person	Nila Faulds
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 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?

Heaton Playschool has been established since 1989 and has operated from the present building since 1996. The provision has sole use of the building when in session. The setting operates from the Guide Headquarters building opposite Markland Hill Primary School in the Heaton area of Bolton. The provision is run by an individual.

Children have access to a hall, bathroom facilities and an outdoor play area. The provision is open Monday to Friday from 08.45 until 15.15 during term time. It is registered to provide care for a maximum of 26 children at any one time and there are currently 45 children on roll. Of these, 34 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports a number of children with additional needs.

There are seven staff employed to work directly with the children. Six staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting has completed the Pre School Learning Alliance accreditation scheme, 'Aiming for Quality'.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well maintained environment. They stay healthy because staff exercise good hygiene practices to minimise the risk of cross-infection. For example, they have clear cleaning routines and use colour coded cloths and mops for different tasks. Children learn about personal care routines as they wash their hands at appropriate times of the day. Staff ensure a good supply of toiletries is available so that children become increasingly independent in their self-help skills. Staff have a clear understanding of the sick child policy and deal with incidents of children becoming unwell sensitively and quickly, ensuring that the children are well looked after and that appropriate measures are in place to minimise the spread of infection.

Children's dietary requirements are successfully met as staff gather information from parents about their children's dietary needs and take this information into account when planning snacks. Parents provide a packed lunch for their children and these are appropriately stored, minimising the risk of contamination. The children develop an awareness of healthy eating as staff provide snacks that are healthy and nutritious, aiding children's growth and development. The children also participate in themed activities in relation to healthy eating and they recently made a pictorial display of healthy and unhealthy foods.

All the children have lots of opportunities to enjoy and develop their physical skills. They play outdoors morning and afternoon each day and also have the opportunity to participate in a gym session once a week, all of which contributes to their good health and physical development. They learn and discover about their bodies and develop coordination as they walk, run, jump, climb, slide, ride bicycles and throw balls outdoors. Children in receipt of nursery education demonstrate good skills in combining a range of movements. For example, two children well work together to swing a skipping rope in the same direction. The children adjust speed and direction well when negotiating pathways and they show respect for other children's personal space. They persevere when learning a new skill. For example, the children use their bodies to swing a hula hoop around their waist. They use tools that require hand eye coordination and show increasing control when using one handed tools.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment. The building is old but staff make the environment bright and stimulating as children's artwork, posters and information for parents are displayed. Space is effectively organised into areas of provision and the children are able to move around freely. They are confident to use all of their surroundings to extend their play. There is a good selection of equipment and furniture available, allowing children to play, rest and eat in comfort. There is a wide range of resources available to help children

progress in all areas of their development. Toys are stored at child height, enabling children to access toys freely to extend their play and developing choice and independence. Resources are checked on a regular basis to minimise risks to children.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place and observed at all times. Staff conduct a daily safety check of the internal and external areas to ensure that the environment in which children are cared for is safe and secure. The evacuation procedure is practised with the children on a very regular basis to help them develop an awareness of what to do in the event of an emergency, such as a fire. The fire exits are clear of obstruction, however, they are not clearly identifiable. Staff supervise the children well enabling them to play safely and independently. They encourage children's awareness of keeping themselves safe through discussion and play activities. The children develop an awareness of the boundaries from an early age; they know they need to line up to go outside.

All the required policies and procedures are in place and staff have a secure and confident understanding of child protection matters and procedures, ensuring children's welfare is effectively safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff are in the process of developing the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They plan and provide a range of interesting and age appropriate activities and experiences to help children develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. The children also benefit from activities outside the setting as staff utilise local amenities such as the library, shops and a local nature reserve to widen children's experiences. Staff observe the children as they play and use this information to chart their progress and to inform planning. The younger children play alongside the older children and they have access to all the activities. Staff adapt the activities and discussion surrounding the activities to meet the younger children's needs and preferred ways of learning. The younger children also benefit from daily small group activities with the deputy.

Staff deploy themselves well to enable them to offer appropriate care and support to the children. They sit at the same level as the children as they play and take a real interest in what the children do and say. Staff interact with the children to extend language, introduce new words and concepts and to encourage imaginative thinking. As a result, children find a voice and make connections as they listen and respond. Staff offer lots of positive physical contact to the children by means of hugs and cuddles; consequently, children openly seek reassurance when they become upset. Staff share warm relationships with the children, who are happy and settled in their care.

The children are able to move around freely from one activity to another. They develop their fine manipulative skills and have fun as they make icing sugar and then use a spoon to spread it onto a bun. They enjoy being imaginative as they play with a host of imaginative and small world resources. A group of children play 'hairdressers'. They pretend to wash hair using a bottle of shampoo, and comb and brush the doll's hair before using headbands, bobbles and tiaras to finish their hairstyle. Another group of children are absorbed in their play with water,

pebbles and animals that live in the sea; they feel the pebbles under the water and watch closely as they swim the animals under the water. A group of children make connections and develop representing skills, they sit with a member of staff and follow simple instructions as they find bricks of different colours and shapes. Staff support the children as they build models to represent those on a photograph. The children show pride in their achievements as they smile and clap their hands.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The manager has attended training in relation to the Foundation Stage and has cascaded information to other staff at regular staff meetings. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and use their understanding well to plan and provide a wide range of stimulating activities and play opportunities. Staff observe the children during play and use this information to chart their developmental progress, inform planning and identify children's next steps in learning. The children have individual targets for the next steps in their learning. Staff complete children's developmental records on a regular basis and these show that the children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff prepare well for focused activities and use props well to engage the children. They ask open ended questions to extend children's language and to challenge their thinking. Staff ensure that all children have the opportunity to make a contribution to the discussion at circle time and they encourage them to listen and to take turns. There is a busy atmosphere; children have access to a host of activities and are mainly engaged and occupied. However, for a short period of time, just before the end of the morning session, activities become a little chaotic and some of the older children become distracted.

Staff place lots of emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development. The children move around with confidence and seek out others and make attachments, for example, on arrival, the children go to find their friends to play with. The children show care and concern for others; a child helps another child to fasten a zip as they play with the dressing up clothes. They develop good self-help skills as they independently use the bathroom, put on their hats and coats before going out to play and help to tidy up. The children are confident speakers and use language well to explain what is happening, connect ideas and anticipate what will happen next. They recognise and enjoy rhyme during a story. The children handle books with care and have favourite stories which staff read to them. They have opportunities to use a variety of tools to mark make and to ascribe meaning to word. Children develop an understanding that we write for a purpose as they use mark making in a variety of role play situations. Children recognise their own name as they self-register on arrival. They begin to form recognisable letters and older children are able to write their name.

Children learn about mathematical concepts, such as number, shape, space and measure, through a variety of play activities, story times and song. However, there are limited opportunities for the children to use problem solving to begin to calculate. Children are able to name the shapes of everyday objects. They explore size when they look at and talk about their heights. The children develop an awareness of capacity when they bake and play with measuring jugs in the sand and water. They have lots of opportunities to explore and investigate a variety of natural and man made materials such as ice, sand, water, cornflour, cooked spaghetti, paint and glue. The children show an awareness of change and talk about what is happening when they look

at ice beginning to melt. They have access to a computer on a daily basis and are confident and able to use equipment and complete simple programs without support. The children also have access to a wide range of other interactive resources. Children develop a sense of time as follow the setting's daily routine; they know that it is time for outdoor play after story time. They show an interest in the world around them and they express feelings about significant family events.

Children are able to express their thoughts and ideas using a range of creative media and materials. They explore what happens when they mix colours and textures and are able to model using wood and nails. The children enjoy singing and dancing to music and explore sounds and tempos. They have lots of opportunities to re-enact their own experiences and develop their understanding of the world in which they live, as they are involved in a wide variety of role play situations, for example, home corner, hairdressers, vets, shop and restaurant.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff gather detailed information from parents about their children's individual needs to enable them to be in a position to best meet these needs. The setting provides a good range of resources and play activities that reflect the diverse society in which we live. As a result, children develop an awareness of the wider world. The children also celebrate their own and others' festivals, helping them to value each other's similarities and differences and develop respect for other people's cultures and traditions. The staff demonstrate a positive attitude towards children with additional needs. They work closely with parents to meet their children's specific needs.

Staff have a good understanding of the behaviour management policy and are consistent in their approach. They act as good role models to the children as they treat them with care and concern, use 'please' and 'thank you' and encourage the children to share and take turns. Consequently, children develop an awareness of what is expected of them and they are polite. Staff help older children to talk to each other when a minor altercation arises, encouraging them to negotiate, share their feelings and reach a positive conclusion. Children's efforts and achievements are valued and celebrated, helping to develop their confidence and self-assurance. The children develop a good sense of belonging. They enter with ease and go happily to play with their friends. Staff encourage the children to make choices and experiment during their play. The children feel valued and develop a sense of their own identity as resources reflect their cultural backgrounds. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Key workers work with parents to gradually settle the children, helping to build trusting three way relationships and a shared understanding from an early stage. Effective systems are in place to keep parents informed about their children's activities and forthcoming events. For example, staff meet with them to discuss their children's progress and they receive regular newsletters. Parents are happy with the service provided, levels of care and activities afforded. The partnership with parents of children in receipt of nursery education is good. A comprehensive source of information regarding nursery education is made available to parents as well as a forum for discussion at an initial meeting. Effective systems are in place to gather information

about children's starting points. Parents feel they are involved in their children's learning and comment that they feel well informed about their children's achievements and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The registered person keeps herself up to date with current legislation. There is a vetting procedure in place that helps to protect children. A good induction procedure ensures staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff have regard for children's well-being as they attend training to further develop their childcare practice. Numerous staff have a valid first aid certificate ensuring they have up to date knowledge of what to do in the event of an accident or minor injury.

The record of children's attendance and observations during the inspection show that ratios are maintained to promote children's care, learning and play. The staff work well together as a team. The premises have shared use and staff have to set up furniture and activities and tidy them away at the end of each day; they work hard to ensure that the environment and activities look interesting and inviting. An effective key worker system is in place and works well to meet children's needs.

All required policies and procedures are in place and these work well to positively promote children's health, safety and welfare. All required documentation is in place and is well organised. Staff maintain individual children's records to confidentially.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The manager is responsible for the delivery of nursery education and she supports staff well as she works alongside them each day. Regular staff meetings and evaluation meetings take place, ensuring effective and open lines of communication. Good systems are in place to monitor the delivery of nursery education and staff are fully involved in this process. The management team have a good awareness of the strengths and areas for development and they liaise with an advisory teacher for support and advice.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of care and nursery education, a number of recommendations were agreed in relation to organisation of resources, creative activities, staff deployment, safety, documentation and the availability of fresh drinking water.

Imaginative resources are now better organised to support children's learning and children have more opportunities to be creative. Arrangements in relation to management cover have been reviewed and staff deployment has been developed to ensure minimum ratios are maintained at all times. Children can now use the climbing equipment safely as mats are used on the floor. The hot water in the bathroom is now of an appropriate temperature and cleaning materials are now stored safely. Children are able to quench their thirst independently as fresh

drinking water is accessible to them. The children's record of attendance now includes the times of their arrival and departure and documentation is stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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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):

- ensure fire exits are clearly identifiable
- continue to develop the 'Birth to three matters' framework for the younger children.

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):

- review the organisation of the middle of the morning session so that children do not become distracted
- develop teaching practices to give children more opportunities to begin to use problem solving to calculate.

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