



## Herne Farm Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109855
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 November 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Lisa Jane Cupples
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Leisure Centre, Herne Farm, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU31 4PJ
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<b>Registered person</b>	Herne Farm Pre School
<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?

Herne Farm Pre-school is managed by a committee and mainly serves the local community. It opened in 1979 and operates from a large hall in Herne Farm Leisure Centre in Petersfield, a residential area of Hampshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times only. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and 12:15 until 14:45 on Monday and Wednesday. Children have sole access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children from two years to four years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. It is the pre-schools normal practice to accept children the term before they are three. Children mainly come from the local community and attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties, disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school currently employs four part-time and two full-time members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The setting 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 benefit from a nutritious diet because the staff team have a clear understanding of healthy eating. They work extremely closely with the parents to ensure a wide range of fruit for snacks is provided. They implement clear policies, which state the pre-school promotes healthy eating and all parents are aware of this. Children are beginning to understand about healthy eating through daily discussions and talk openly about which food is good for them 'helping them to grow big and strong'. Staff sit with the children during snack and lunch time, developing good table manners and encouraging the children to be polite. On several occasions during each half-term period the pre-school operates a café style snack time during the sessions. Children choose from a menu and the role-play area is set up with tables and chairs. Children help to prepare their own snacks, making sandwiches, cutting fruit and vegetables and spreading toast increasing their independence effectively.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene and are developing good self care skills through daily discussion and general routines. Children are able to explain why it is important to wash their hands, for example, saying 'it's to get rid of all the germs'. Children are protected and enjoy a healthy environment because the staff implement stringent hygiene procedures to help prevent the possible spread of infection, for example, after helping children to wipe their noses staff use an anti-bacterial hand wash to clean their hands, this also means children are supervised extremely well because staff don't have to keep leaving the room to wash their hands all the time.

Parents give written consent for staff to seek emergency medical treatment and to administer medication. Staff have a very clear understanding of the procedures to record all accidents that occur on the premises and parents sign to acknowledge that they have been informed, helping to keep children healthy. Children will receive appropriate treatment if an accident occurs because most members of staff hold a current first aid certificate.

A first aid kit is stored in the kitchen area at the side of the hall, although some of the sterile dressings are out-of-date. This may cause a delay to administering treatment if an accident occurs.

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Children have many opportunities to develop their large muscle skills during their time at the setting. They are able to climb and slide using the indoor climbing frame, which is well supervised by staff and safety mats ensure the children are safe. Children have access to an extensive

range of equipment to help develop their hand to eye co-ordination, they use bats and balls and throw and catch balls and bean bags to develop these skills. The pre-school has a Top Start Kit of equipment for physical activities. Children ride wheeled toys and tricycles around the edge of the room, showing a good understanding of spatial awareness as they squeeze through small gaps and avoid collisions with objects and other children. The setting has the use of a fully secure outdoor play area, although it is not being used to its full potential.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The premises are extremely warm and welcoming, with children's work displayed around the room on removable display boards. Children's posters, number lines and positive images are all displayed in this way at the children's level, making it inviting for them as they enter the room. Children move freely around the room from one activity to another. They move with confidence and purpose, often talking to each other or staff about what they are going to do next. The room is organised differently, depending on who is attending the session. For example, the Wednesday afternoon session for children due to go to school is more structured, so less tables with activities are set up, helping the children to focus on specific activities and learning outcomes.

Children benefit from an extensive and varied range of stimulating and interesting resources and activities. Staff ensure the substantial stock of resources and equipment are used fully, operating a rota system to ensure all the children have access to everything. The equipment is stored in a large, well-organised cupboard towards the back of the hall. The vast array of equipment is all exceptionally clean and well-maintained providing a safe play environment for all the children. The resources reflect the age and stage of the children, helping to promote their development and learning in all areas. Children learn how to respect the equipment and remind others to pick things up so they don't get broken, learning about their own environment and taking responsibility for it. Staff recognise this and praise the children for looking after things, so that other children will be able to use them.

Children benefit greatly from a very safe and secure environment because staff are extremely vigilant and remove any possible risks to the children. For example, the premises are checked daily before the children arrive, the chairs from the centre are stacked safely and the fire exits are checked to ensure they are kept clear for quick emergency evacuation of the building. Children are learning the importance of keeping themselves safe through discussion and the routines of the group. For example, children are able to explain what will happen if there is a fire, one four-year-old demonstrated what the fire alarm sounds like. They are fully aware of the emergency evacuation procedures. Other activities include group discussion at registration time about staying safe when watching the fireworks.

The whole staff team have an exceptionally clear understanding of their role and responsibility towards safeguarding the children in their care. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to effectively protect the children at all times. Staff are aware of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and would follow the settings procedures to the letter, ensuring every child is safe when attending the pre-school. All existing injuries and incidents that occur are recorded

meticulously and the parents or carers are required to sign to acknowledge the entries, helping to protect the children and keep the parents informed.

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

The provision is good.

Children of all ages are very happy and settled in the group. On arrival they excitedly talk about the activities that are set up and tell each other what they are going to do. They greet the staff with smiling faces and chat about how they are. Children enthusiastically explore their surroundings, initially moving from one activity to another to see what is on offer. They soon settle down and are all busy and occupied with the activities they have chosen. Although there are many activities to choose from, such as play dough, the climbing frame and miniature world toys, there are few opportunities for children select freely if they want to do something else. Resources are stored in a large cupboard, limiting the children's ability to develop their self-selection and decision making skills.

Staff have a clear understanding of the Birth to Three Matters Framework, enabling them to provide a stimulating environment for the youngest children. Most of the first term of an academic year is spent settling in the new children and helping them to get used to the setting in general, staff are extremely good at settling the children down when they arrive, making them feel at ease in the pre-school. Children are allocated key workers as soon as they attend, although this is flexible because children may bond well with another member of staff, making it easier for the children to form strong relationships with the staff.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All the staff have a very clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and early learning goals. Key workers observe the children in their own styles and collate the information as it is transferred to their individual records of achievement. The children's records contain observations, samples of their work and photographs, building 'child study' files for the parents and helping staff to track the children's progress in all areas throughout their time in the pre-school. The information gathered in the files is used to inform the curriculum, to ensure all activities are planned to meet the children's individual needs. The staff team extend the children's ideas and effectively question the children, making them think about what they are trying to achieve and the best way to reach their goal. Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the developmental needs of children and this enables them to differentiate the activities to cater for all ages and abilities. They extend activities effectively for some children and lower the level to meet the needs of others, building their self-esteem as they set obtainable challenges for all the children.

Children are developing good self-care skills during the daily routines. They independently hang up their coats, put on aprons, wash their hands and throw their rubbish in the bin after snack time. Children work well together and are learning to co-operate effectively during their play and they negotiate roles and costumes for their own games. Children's spoken language and listening skills are developing exceptionally well, staff talk quietly throughout the sessions and at certain times they quietly rattle a tambourine, this signals to the children that something is changing, such as tidy-up time. Children speak openly in group situations, expressing their

feelings, sharing experiences and suggesting ideas. For example, talking about which story to have, what they are going to do next and how excited they are about fireworks night. Children have access to pens and pencils during every session on the mark-making table, although they have few opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills in different ways and for a variety of purposes.

Children use mathematical language to describe quantity, shape and size during everyday activities. They count confidently and recognise numerals during games and on the number line. Children investigate and explore the resources on the interest table, talking about how they feel and looking at the patterns on the pine cones. They are developing an exceptionally good understanding of other cultures as they cover festivals from around the world. They enthusiastically try new foods, listen to music from other countries and learn about the stories and legends behind the celebrations. Children are able to sing a wide range of songs from memory and confidently match actions to rhymes. Staff incorporate other learning experiences at every opportunity. For example, during Incy Wincy Spider, extremely good discussion took place about rainbows and the weather outside. Children have ample opportunities to express themselves freely during chalking, painting, art and craft and role-play during the sessions

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

The provision is outstanding.

The entire staff team have an exceptionally good understanding of equal opportunities and implement the groups comprehensive policies effectively. All the staff take the time to get to know each child so that they are able to meet their individual needs in the best possible way. For example, by talking to new children about their families and siblings, or planning activities linked to children's interests, helping them to feel valued and part of the group. Children show consideration for others and help to build a real sense of belonging as they ask each other about their morning, if they want to join in or remind others to share and take turns fairly. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

The setting has comprehensive and detailed policies and procedures in place regarding special needs. The group's special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has an in depth knowledge of the Code of Practice and clearly understands her role and responsibilities. She works extremely closely with the parents, the whole staff team and other agencies to fully support all the children who attend, ensuring everyone can participate fully in all the activities. Individual education plans are used for some children and small targets of achievement are discussed and agreed with the parents. The SENCO has many files that she has collated over the years containing information and advice for staff and the parents. She has experience of working with children who have special needs and recognises the often sensitive nature of her role. Parents feel the entire staff team are friendly and approachable, building strong relationships throughout the setting.

Children are extremely well behaved because the very clear rules and boundaries are effectively implemented by all members of the staff team. Children learn a strong sense of right and wrong because they know exactly what is expected of them. Staff ensure they kneel down to talk to the children and make eye-contact explaining why the children can't do something, taking their age and stage of development into account. Staff talk with calm and relaxed voices and the

children respond exceptionally well to this approach. The staff explanations enable the children to learn the boundaries in a calm and supportive environment.

Parents receive verbal information about their children's well-being in the group and the activities and progress they are generally making. The parents are able to access their children's records at anytime and value the assessments the staff make. They enjoy looking at the photographs and written statements explaining what the children are gaining from the activities they are taking part in. Parents feel this helps them to support their children's play and learning at home. The group policies have all been reviewed and updated earlier this year, ensuring they are in line with current requirements. These policies are on display at all times and parents know they have access to them whenever they want. Parents play an active role in the pre-school, from being on the parents committee, to providing additional resources to expand the children's learning and opportunities effectively. For example, providing an extensive range of fruit for a tasting activity, helping on the parent's rota, washing dressing-up clothes and sharing their skills with the children.

The partnership with parents of children who receive funding for early education is outstanding. Parents receive high quality information about the setting's aims and objectives and how the group supports the children's care and learning in all areas. Information about the curriculum and six areas of learning are covered helping to inform the parents about what their children will be doing during their time in the pre-school. Parents have the opportunity to talk to their children's key workers on a daily basis. They are able to look at their children's records at any time and have a section where they can make ongoing written contributions about the children's learning in the group and at home. Parents value the commitment of the staff team and acknowledge how hard they all work. Staff prepare written reports covering all six areas of learning for the parents every term, ensuring they are fully informed about their children's progress and learning in the pre-school.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The deployment of the staff is exceptional, ensuring that children receive high quality support and supervision throughout the sessions. The staff are vigilant and are skilled at keeping an eye on the whole room, not just the activities they are at. This enables them to react to anything going on in the room so that it can be dealt with quickly, efficiently and calmly allowing the children to continue with their play and learning in a relaxed atmosphere. The setting has robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure children are protected at all times. The daily routines run smoothly and flow well, enabling the children to fully participate in an extensive range of activities in small and large groups. Children are never left around waiting for something to happen because the staff team are well prepared and organised, ensuring everything is ready for the next part of the session. The entire staff team and the committee have a clear understanding of the inspection and registration process. All the paperwork and documentation is maintained to a high standard ensuring the children's play, learning and general well-being is nurtured in a caring and supportive environment. Therefore, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The new management committee have a clear understanding of their role in the setting. The staff team are extremely well-established and provide a calm and relaxed environment for the children and their families. Clear roles and responsibilities are defined enabling the group to operate effectively for the benefit of the children who attend. A new appraisal system has been implemented to ensure individual staff performance and contribution to the group is monitored and training needs are identified. The daily routines and activities are evaluated well and adapted as necessary to ensure they meet the needs of the children, improving the delivery and quality in all areas. For example, allowing less children to use the sand tray at one time enabling all the children to be able to talk to staff and complete the objectives, such as talking about volume. There is a tracking system in place to ensure that all stepping stones are covered during a one year period, ensuring a well-balanced curriculum for the children. The supervisors, staff team and the committee have a clear vision for the future of the setting. They are continually assessing their own strengths and weaknesses, looking at ways to further improve and develop the quality of nursery education and care for all the children who attend.

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

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to devise and implement a system to record any incident of physical restraint and significant behavioural issues; to ensure that accident records are countersigned by parents, and that the medication book is appropriately prepared to ensure that medication policy is fully implemented; to ensure the register and visitors book record times of arrival and departure and to review the complaints procedure, uncollected child procedure, lost child policy and serious injury policy to ensure they are in line with current guidance. All paperwork, documentation, policies and procedures now meet the requirements of registration, ensuring the children are cared for effectively in a well managed and organised setting.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to provide further opportunities for children to practise mathematical problem-solving and to extend the current systems of planning to record the intended learning outcome of activities. Children have many opportunities to develop their mathematical problem-solving skills through daily activities planned by the knowledgeable staff team. For example, children are encouraged to work things out for themselves through using everyday items and objects or their own fingers to begin to calculate. The system for recording the planned curriculum links to the next steps in each child's development. Key workers discuss the learning objectives for each child at meetings to ensure they are fully aware of the intended learning activities, helping children to reach their full potential.

### **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):

- ensure the contents of the first aid box are up-to-date
- provide more opportunities for children to self-select resources throughout the session to further develop their independence and decision making skills (also applies to nursery education)

#### 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):

- increase the use of the secure outdoor play area to further enhance and enrich the children's experiences in different environments (also applies to care)
- provide more opportunities for children to practise their emergent writing skills for a variety of purposes in different situations

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