



Highfield Grange Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY321592
Inspection date	28 November 2006
Inspector	Angela Rowley
Setting Address	Highfield Grange Avenue, Marus Bridge, Wigan, WN3 6SU
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Registered person	Gillian Ramsdale
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Highfield Grange Pre-school has been operating for 18 years. In 2006 the group re-registered under a new provider and moved to the present building, which is situated in a residential area of Marus Bridge, Wigan. Children are cared for in one main room with access to adjacent toilet facilities. There is no area for outside play. It is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.15 during term time.

A maximum of 24 children aged from two to under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. At present there are 40 children on roll. Of these, six are in receipt of funded nursery education. The nursery currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs six members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is sufficiently promoted. Some planned activities increase children's awareness of the benefits of exercise and healthy eating, although practically, children have limited opportunities to access fresh air and engage in vigorous physical exercise. Children are beginning to develop skill in the use of small tools and equipment, as they are provided with some opportunities to practise this. For example, using the mouse with the computer and pouring their own drinks at snack time.

Adequate hygiene practices help prevent the spread of infection and so children are beginning to learn about, for example, the importance of hand washing at key times. Children's medical health is appropriately protected as suitable procedures ensure that children who are ill or infectious are excluded. Clear health information, accident and medicine records are kept.

Children are suitably nourished. They benefit from independent access to healthy snacks, such as slices of fruit. They are suitably supported in pouring their own drinks and using the water dispenser when they are thirsty. Consequently children learn how to respond to the needs of their own bodies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a bright airy room where some attention is given to providing a welcoming environment, by displaying some posters and children's artwork. They freely participate in an appropriate range of activities because the room is suitably planned to allow freedom of movement. A good range of equipment is available, however, children's independent play and learning is sometimes hindered because some areas, such as the home corner, are only basically resourced and some toys are grubby. Also, because of limited accessible storage, children have few opportunities for self-selection of resources and to fully engage in the tidying up process.

Children's safety is given high priority. Hazards are effectively identified and minimised, which means that children can be independent, for example, by visiting the bathroom without having to be accompanied. Security measures are effective, with outer doors locked and password systems used for the collection of individuals. Children are provided with some valuable opportunities to learn about staying safe, for example, activities in relation to road safety and fire safety. They also enjoy visits from, for example, the police officer.

Children are adequately protected. The provider has attended relevant recent training in relation to safeguarding children and has implemented suitable procedures. Staff understand the basic procedures and know their responsibilities in the event of concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and happy. Most come in without support and others seek reassurance from a familiar adult with whom they have formed attachments. Relationships at all levels are good. Staff know children well because they implement a basic key-working system and most children play co-operatively and have formed special friendships. They seek out their friends to share experiences, for example, going for snack together.

All children receive a sufficient range of activities, which keeps them occupied throughout the session. However, the provision of activities and experiences follows the same principle in each session, which means that the provision for younger children is not always appropriate for their ages and stages of development. Despite having attended specific training, staff do not use their observations of children under three to help plan for their learning and development, by using, for example, the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Key staff have a sufficient understanding of the Foundation Stage and provide suitable activities from which children broadly learn. Assessments of children's progress are not yet securely established. Staff are beginning to use observations to inform them about what children can do, although they do not use the information effectively to plan the next steps for individual learning. Children are provided with some interesting activities which broaden their experiences, for example, tasting different types of bread, planting autumn seeds and celebrating different festivals. However, the delivery of activities sometimes limits children's opportunities to learn, because staff are not always clear about the key learning intentions or focus of the activity and do not challenge more able children.

Children are confident in their relationships and are provided with some positive opportunities to develop independence when they select their own snack and pour their own drink. They are very imaginative because they have a good range of opportunities to be creative, for example, role play, free painting and mixing colour, in addition to planned craft activities. Children are developing a concept of numbers, as they count out spades of sand to make a sand pie. Their awareness of the written word is developing when they select their names for self-registration and snack time. However, children have limited continuous provision within the environment to make marks and to use numerals, to reinforce their learning.

Children's interest in and use of ICT is developing satisfactorily. Some children use the mouse competently and offer support to others. Children are beginning to construct with a purpose, building rockets and taking pride in displaying them on the side. They are beginning to develop an awareness of different ways of life through the celebration of a range of festivals. Children have limited opportunities to develop a sense of place because they are rarely taken out.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Individual needs are known and met because staff have developed informal relationships with parents, which enables them to share essential information, for example, regarding children's health and medical needs. All children are warmly welcomed and a sufficient range of resources and activities are provided, which positively represent those who attend as well as the wider community. During a recent celebration of Diwali, children and staff enjoyed dressing up in Indian dress provided by parents.

Children's behaviour is generally good, because they are kept suitably occupied and supported by sufficient numbers of staff. Some children show kindness towards each other and provide support to those less able on the computer, and when finding their name cards. They play co-operatively on the see-saw and share in small groups. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff mostly communicate informally with parents, to exchange information. Some documents such as a pre-school leaflet, newsletters and displayed information, helps keep parents informed about how the setting operates. The partnership with parents of children receiving funded nursery education is satisfactory. Basic information is shared on admission, which helps staff know what children can already do. Information regarding pre-school activities is mostly shared verbally, although there are few planned opportunities to involve parents in their child's learning, particularly in relation to the progress they are making. This hinders children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

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

Children are safe and well cared for because suitable and experienced persons work with them. Sufficient training opportunities help staff update their skills, although their learning is not always put into practice within the setting. Suitable staff ratios and consistent deployment, ensure that children develop close, friendly relationships with their carers.

The leadership and management of the funded nursery education is satisfactory. The provider of the setting uses appropriate sources of advice and support, to help guide practice and make improvements. She works directly in the setting and knows all children well, which helps her evaluate their progress and the quality of the provision. She has an adequate awareness of the setting's strengths and weaknesses, although, she is not always sufficiently organised to ensure that the areas for development are addressed.

Documentation is mostly satisfactory. Basic policies and procedures are in place and some are still in the process of completion, for example, the development of clear procedures for the recruitment of staff. All regulatory records are in place and are suitably kept, although confidentiality is compromised when they are stored in an area accessible to parents.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- improve the quality of toys and equipment, ensuring that they are clean, provided in sufficient quantity for meaningful play, and organised so that children can make free choices and fully participate in the tidying up process
- improve the provision for children under three years by using, for example, the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide planning and assessment
- continue to develop the operational plan to ensure that clear policies and procedures are established and understood by all staff
- improve the procedures for the safe recruitment of suitable staff
- ensure that records are stored securely and that confidentiality is maintained at all times.

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 planning for individual learning to ensure that assessments of children's progress are based on observations that are used to plan the next steps to help children make progress towards the early learning goals

- improve the delivery of activities ensuring that all staff clearly understand the focus and learning outcome with clear differentiation to challenge more able children
- increase children's practical opportunities to reinforce their learning through continuous provision, particularly in the areas of language and literacy and mathematics
- improve partnerships with parents by developing ways to involve them in their child's learning and be informed of their progress.

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