



Houghton Nursery Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY334729
Inspection date	30 November 2006
Inspector	Stephen Andrew Blake
Setting Address	Houghton Nursery Group, Jackson Road, Houghton, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 0PA
Telephone number	01228 558888
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Registered person	Houghton Nursery Group
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Houghton Nursery Group was established in the 1960s and moved to its current premises in 2006. The setting operates from a purpose built building within the village of Houghton, approximately three miles from Carlisle. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year and provides a breakfast club, out of school club and a holiday play scheme. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from two years to under eight years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves children from the immediate and extended areas.

Houghton Nursery Group is managed by a committee and employs a total of six staff including two support staff. Staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff understand and implement written procedures effectively. They enjoy a range of age-appropriate and planned activities that enable them to explore, test and develop their physical skills, for example, when using the outdoor play equipment or constructing from a range of inter-connecting resources. Staff have a sound knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have a good understanding of each child's stage of development. All children have a positive attitude to physical exercise and tackle a range of well-planned indoor and outdoor options with enthusiasm.

Staff attending the nursery hold appropriate early years first aid qualifications but staff within the after school club do not. Children's individual health needs are monitored effectively by staff and snacks are planned according to children's dietary requirements. Children help themselves to accessible drinks and enjoy fresh fruit at snack time. They are beginning to understand the value of good nutrition and this helps them to stay healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children stay safe because staff provide a spacious environment where most risks are identified and minimised. There is a gap in the garden hedge. Staff have a good understanding of children's individual abilities and of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits. This means that children have opportunities to safely participate in a range of well-planned indoor and outdoor activities, for example, when cutting around shapes with scissors and using the outdoor resources.

Children stay safe because staff enable them to independently access a range of good quality toys and equipment which meets safety standards. Throughout the nursery day and during the out of school club, staff monitor all children's choice of toys and activities to ensure that they are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Policies and procedures are effective and ensure that children are safeguarded.

Children feel secure, have a good relationship with the adults caring for them and are confident to ask staff for help when needed. Staff have established a well-written child protection statement and have a good understanding of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's child protection procedures. This helps to ensure that children stay safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at Houghton Nursery Group. They achieve well because staff are skilled and use their sound understanding of child development and of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, to provide good quality care and education. Staff use their knowledge of child development effectively to plan activities and resources that are accessible and age-appropriate in accordance with individual children's abilities.

Children settle quickly on arrival as staff ensure they have good information from parents and carers regarding the child's individual needs for that day. The youngest children make good progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self.

Staff support early communication skills effectively through high quality adult-child interactions. Children relate well to each other and have a good relationship with staff. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a good range of planned activities, for example, when going for local walks and visiting nearby places of interest.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are motivated and challenged as staff provide a good range of accessible resources which support their development across all areas of learning. Children are eager to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They listen intently to stories and eagerly participate in favourites, such as 'Little bear's special wish'. Children are using marks readily to represent their ideas and some older children are beginning to acquire the skills that will enable them to write their own names. They use their imagination effectively, for example, when shopping for fruit and vegetables in the home corner or talking on the telephones. Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them, for example, through visiting speakers and when visiting local places of interest, such as the Tullie House museum.

Children work well together. They respond enthusiastically to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. Children are confident in their use of numbers during play, for example, when counting the numbers on dominoes and singing counting songs. Their physical skills develop and improve through an appropriate variety of experiences, for example, when using the outdoor resources and a good range of tools for craft and construction activities.

Right from the start, staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. Staff have a flexible approach to planning and this generally works well. However, staff plan for some children's stories to be read simultaneously within each keyworker group and on these occasions, children find this distracting. Staff have a generally flexible approach to planning, and a good balance between adult-led and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. They have created a very relaxed and supportive learning environment. Staff are perceptive to children's

interests during self-initiated play and use questions successfully to challenge children's thinking and language skills. They use effective systems of assessment to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and understand what children need to do next to develop their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the nursery because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children's behaviour is good. They work well to problem solve with minimum adult intervention and are considerate and helpful towards each other. Staff implement age-appropriate and sensitive behaviour management strategies. Children have an appropriate understanding of right and wrong as staff offer gentle reminders to care for each other and in discussions about the importance of sharing.

Children have a good range of opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, visitors to the setting and outings to local places of interest. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. This contributes to all children's well-being within the nursery and out of school club. Parents' views about their child's needs and interests are actively sought before their child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Staff ensure that all parents know how their children are developing and progressing and provide parents with a good range of written and verbal information about the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of leadership and management of nursery education is good. Children's care is enhanced because staff are well-organised and clear about their roles and responsibilities.

The premises are well-organised. Indoor and outdoor opportunities are laid out to maximise play and learning opportunities for children. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being are in place and regularly reviewed.

Children benefit from qualified and skilled staff that are effectively inducted and supervised. An effective monitoring system ensures that the setting's policies and procedures are consistently applied. Staff are committed to continuous improvement and development. They meet regularly to reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and education as part of an accredited quality assurance scheme. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

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. 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.

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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 that there is at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate on the premises at any one time, with regard to the after school club
- ensure that the premises and outside play area are secure and that children are not able to leave them unsupervised, with regard to the gap in the garden hedge

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 story time arrangements within the keyworker groups to ensure that simultaneous stories do not present a distraction to children.

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