

Holders Farm Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203670
Inspection date	26 March 2007
Inspector	Jacqueline Oldman
Setting Address	43 Osea Way, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 6JS
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Registered person	Pauline Colyer
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?

Holdes Farm Kindergarten is privately owned and opened in 1971. It operates from two rooms on the ground floor of a converted house in Chelmsford. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The kindergarten is open each weekday from 09.30 to 15.30 during school term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 53 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 39 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local and wider community. The setting supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties or disabilities, and also supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 10 members of staff. Of these, seven staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are currently working towards a recognised early years or social care qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP), National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA), Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) and works closely with the Area Special Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff adhere to well-established health and hygiene procedures. Key staff have attended food hygiene training and ensure all food preparation is carried out hygienically. Children are gaining a very good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy through guidance, daily routines and themed activities. They establish independence in their personal care routines supported well by the staff. Children follow good hand washing routines and use soap, fresh running water and paper towels to help stop the spread of infection. They learn to wipe their noses on tissues and dispose of them hygienically. Nappy changing is sensitively undertaken with privacy offered to preserve children's dignity and self-esteem. Most staff have attended first aid training, which is regularly updated, ensuring their responses are in line with current recommendations in the event of an accident. Information about different health issues such as infectious diseases and meningitis are displayed on both staff and parent notice boards to help prevent the risk of cross-infection.

Children benefit from a healthy diet and they have taken part in '5 a day' activities to promote positive attitudes to healthy eating. They are offered nutritious snacks such as a variety of different fruit or try new tastes linked to topic work. Children are selected to ask their friends what drink they would like, and serve them, which promotes their independence. Children staying for lunch time enjoy a packed lunch provided by their parent or carer. Staff encourage parents to include healthy choices and ask them to include an ice pack to ensure food is kept fresh. High regard is given to good manners as the children sit together and develop their social interaction skills. Information is gathered about any allergies or special dietary requirements which are reviewed regularly to enable children's individual needs to be met consistently.

Children enthusiastically enjoy a range of activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Children climb and balance with confidence on the indoor and outdoor apparatus. Space is cleared in the main play room so that children can use a range of movements when weather permits them from going outside. They carefully tiptoe to music, count how many children are present or enjoy party games to celebrate a friend's birthday. Outdoors they have opportunities to crawl through a tunnel and play parachute games as they benefit from the extra space provided in the adjoining garden. Children recognise the changes to their body after energetic exercise when they feel hot and out of breath. They can rest or relax in the smaller play room that is organised for quieter activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, well ordered, secure and safe environment because staff have a very good understanding of how to minimise risks to children. Staff implement daily risk assessment in order to identify and reduce any potential hazards. Safety measures are further supported with formal safety checks and careful analysis of any accident records. Children benefit from free access to two play rooms and the adjacent toilet facilities, promoting their independence. Effective safety measures ensure they cannot gain unsupervised access to the kitchen or first floor. Children benefit from use of a fully enclosed outdoor play space that includes both grassed and safety surfaced areas, offering opportunities for different types of outdoor play.

Children use a wide range of safe and good quality play equipment that is organised to meet children's individual needs. Children are protected because staff are vigilant about security and ensure a record is kept of all visitors. Children are collected from the small play room at the end of the morning session to prevent children exiting unnoticed or unauthorised persons gaining access. During the inspection the outing's policy was reviewed and revised and a lost child procedure devised. However, children are not yet fully protected as staff are still to be made aware of the revisions.

Children learn about, and practise, road safety when on outings in the local community to help them learn to keep themselves safe. They practise fire drills at least half termly so that they learn how to evacuate the premises efficiently in an emergency. Children are safeguarded because staff are aware of their role and responsibilities in protecting children. Most staff have attended training to ensure they are aware of current information regarding child protection, which ensures that they act in the best interests of children. The new lilac child protection book from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is available and the pre-school has a written child protection policy. A flow chart of the recommended procedure is clearly displayed for staff to refer to if or when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children demonstrate good levels of confidence as they arrive. Most children separate from their main carer with ease and settle into their preferred play very quickly. New children are helped to settle by staff being sensitive to their individual needs, and working closely with parents. Older and more able children demonstrate a sound understanding of the setting's routines and surroundings. They developing good levels of independence as they freely move between activities and their self-esteem is boosted as they receive praise for their achievements.

Children show interest in what they do and persevere at their chosen task. Activities are planned to ensure they can be adapted to provide sufficient support or challenge helping all children to experience success. Children are purposefully engaged throughout the session, working and playing animatedly, either alone or with others. Children respond positively to simple instructions and staff provide many practical experiences giving opportunities for them to experiment, investigate, explore, and be imaginative and creative using all their senses, building on their natural curiosity.

Children are encouraged to respond imaginatively when listening to well-read stories. They take pleasure in being chosen to choose key pictures from the story to share with their friends. Staff's good-humoured interaction helps them to recall familiar home experiences, such as when the family dog went out in the snow. Children begin to communicate their thoughts clearly and develop their confidence in using language to recall past events and share experiences with others. Staff have attended training and use ideas from the 'Birth to three matters' framework as a guide for meaningful observations and assessments of the youngest children.

The quality of teaching and education is good.

Children follow a curriculum based on the Foundation Stage. They participate in activities designed to help them make good progress through the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals. The programme of activities and the indoor and outdoor environment has been developed effectively to provide a stimulating range of learning experiences across the six areas of learning. Children are motivated and interested to learn throughout each session as they

spend time persevering and concentrating on their tasks and activities. There is a good balance between supervised activities and allowing children the freedom to create from their imaginations, for example in role play, modelling from recycled materials and dough activities. They respond extremely well to the staff's expectations for good behaviour.

Staff have a good knowledge of how young children learn, allowing them to learn at their own pace. An effective key worker system ensures that staff know the children extremely well and children are well supported; this enables them to make good progress in all six areas of learning. Staff record positive observations to evidence each child's achievements and the information is transferred into a record showing what children can do, which is used to plan children's next steps in learning. However, this information is not consistently transferred in a timely way in order to maximise outcomes for individual children.

Children make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They are happy and mostly settled in the kindergarten, where they have good opportunities to develop their attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning as they continue to be interested, excited and motivated to learn. Children are eager to help the staff and assist each other with simple tasks such as tidying up at the end of the session or being snack monitor. Children are animated and enthusiastic as they make choices and decisions about their activities. Children show great pride in their achievements and enjoy sharing their knowledge with visitors.

Children are developing their competencies well across aspects of communication, language and literacy. The play rooms are rich in print. Some children know the names of the letters of their name and make marks to represent them, ascribing meaning to their marks. More able children are able to write their names and some form recognisable words as staff encourage all children to believe in themselves as writers. They are encouraged to repeat familiar simple words from their reading books. Children listen to and respond well, joining in with stories when invited. They spend time reading the words or pictures and choose to spend time sharing a book with an adult.

Most children easily count to 10 and beyond and have opportunities to use simple calculations, for example, when deciding how many cups are needed for snack. Children show an interest in shape and space when building the wooden train set, sorting materials to find the 'right' shape when model making or pressing out shapes in dough. Children use the language of size as they discuss which is biggest or order two items by which is longest or shortest. They experiment with volume and capacity as they fill pots with compost to plant seeds. Children are provided with a varied range of activities to promote their physical development.

A wide range of imaginative role play resources are provided so children can express themselves, act out stories and play alongside other children who are engaged in the same theme. They introduce a story line into their play and rearrange props as they develop their stories based on people and events they are familiar with. Children have many opportunities to develop their creativity and to learn through their senses as they explore what happens when they manipulate pastry and explore texture or experiment with the sounds musical instruments make.

Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. They demonstrate their growing knowledge as they incorporate it into their role play. For example, they wear oven gloves to protect their fingers from burning when getting pretend food out of the home corner oven. Imaginative use is made of the indoor and outdoor environment for exploring and investigating

the natural world to find out about and identify features of living things, objects and events they observe. Children enjoy discovering how things decompose, picking apples for cooking activities or watching how a lock works in water play. Children spend lots of time at the recycled material tables building and constructing for pleasure becoming thoroughly engrossed in their creations. They experiment as they select from glue, sticky tape or glue sticks to join a variety of objects. Children have opportunities to find out about and identify the use of information and communication technology (ICT) during role play and when using simple programmes on the computer or interactive globe.

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as staff observe, assess and record their achievements. This information is mostly used effectively to inform the next steps in learning in order to maximise learning outcomes for all children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly greeted by name on arrival making them feel welcomed. The play rooms are set up ready for them and children demonstrate a sense of belonging as they quickly settle to their chosen activity. Staff positively encourage parents to share information so that they can best meet and support children's individual needs. For example, a child who had recently joined the nursery, moving from another country, had their birthday celebration in the nursery with her new friends. There is a clear equal opportunities policy that is fully inclusive and covers all aspects of the staff's care practice. Effective systems are in place to support children that may have additional needs. The special educational needs coordinator is enthusiastic about her role and has attended a range of training modules to enhance her practice and learn how to support children competently.

Children demonstrate they are very aware of the boundaries for expected behaviour and respond positively to the calm staff role models and environment. Children's behaviour is very good and they show care and concern for others in the group. Staff and children all work together in good humour. Children listen and respond immediately when it is time to help pick up the toys. On completion they get their own chair and sit in a circle ready for snack and group time. Staff give plenty of praise and responsibility to children to boost their confidence and help raise their self-esteem.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They form warm and caring relationships with their friends and staff. Children shake hands with the proprietor before going home to show respect for each other. Children learn about diversity as they participate in topic work, share books or look at the many colourful posters with positive images displayed around the nursery. Festivals such as St David's Day, Mardi Gras and Holi, the Hindu Festival of Colour, are celebrated with the children to help learn about the similarities and differences of others. Children learn about the need for recycling materials, take part in charity events and sponsor a guide dog for the blind to help them learn how their actions can affect the lives of others.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. Children benefit from the involvement of parents in topics and language skills, which contribute to their enjoyment, learning and transition into school. For example, in the term before children start school they work closely with the nursery to support children in learning the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet. The manager and key workers are always available for discussion and are welcomed into the nursery. Systems are in place to ensure all parents are kept informed of how their child is

progressing in their development and learning. Parent's views are sought through informal discussion on a regular basis and they are invited to join a session just prior to their child starting. A copy of the programme of activities is displayed and plans are in place to share written information about topic work directly with parents on a half termly basis. Parents make very complementary comments about the staff team. They appreciate the care shown to the children and are impressed by the range of activities and quality of teaching. Parents comment favourably on the friendly and calm atmosphere and approachability of the whole staff team.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are protected because there is a robust recruitment procedure and staff are vetted and cleared through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). The majority of staff have been employed at the kindergarten in excess of 10 years, providing children and their parents with very good continuity of care. Staff work very closely as a team and are flexible to the needs of the provision. If a member of staff is unable to do their shift they organise their own cover by contacting other staff members which ensures staffing ratios are always met.

During the inspection some of the policies and procedures were reviewed. All essential records needed to meet regulations and the National Standards are now in place. There is a very well organised operational plan that contains the policies and procedures which promote the welfare, care and learning of the children. It effectively explains how the setting runs and is readily available so that it can be shared with parents.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager is strongly supported by the stable staff team who all have individual responsibilities regarding the day-to-day operation of the setting. The whole team contribute, during half-termly staff meetings, to the planning in order that a comprehensive curriculum is provided that is adaptable to meet children's individual needs. The setting assesses its own strengths and weaknesses realistically through self-evaluation. The manager constantly searches for ways in which to improve and she regularly attends training opportunities, researches childcare literature reading widely on the subject. There is a staff appraisal system in place and a means to evaluate the activities and ensure children are making good progress. The staff team are all fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and are committed to attend training courses linked to their ongoing professional development.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to consider formalising the strategies used to support children for whom English is an additional language. A clear written policy and procedures are now included in the operational plan to help ensure strategies to enable children to communicate and learn English in context, through practical, meaningful experiences and interactions with others are consistently implemented to help children make good progress.

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.

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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 staff are made fully aware of the outings policy and the procedure to follow in the event of a child being lost.

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 method for recording observations to ensure they are updated on a regular basis in order to maximise outcomes for 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