



## Headcorn Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY340577
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jenny Kane
<b>Setting Address</b>	Headcorn Village Hall, Church Walk, Headcorn, TN27 9HR
<b>Telephone number</b>	07810 012 038
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Paula Skilton
<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?

Headcorn Pre-school has been registered since October 2006. The group has been in operation for over 10 years at another site. It is privately owned and managed.

The pre-school operates from the Longmeadow Hall in the village hall complex in Headcorn. There is currently no access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. However, children go for walks and visits in the local community.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open Monday to Friday during term time from 09:00 to 12:00 with an additional education session on Mondays from 13:00 to 15:30 for the older children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group serves the local area and surrounding area.

There are currently 30 children on roll aged from two to five years. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. The group supports children with additional needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

Including the manger there are seven staff who work with the children. Of these, six hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications.

The group receives support from the Local Authority Early Years advisory teacher. They are members of The Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and bright environment, which has a lot of natural light. Staff ensure children remain healthy while at the pre-school because they maintain high standards throughout, sharing tasks of cleaning and kitchen duties. Older children are developing good self-care skills taking themselves independently to the toilets. They understand the importance of washing their hands after using the toilet, before eating snack and after messy play.

Children enjoy healthy snacks during the session. They visit the café when they want to, finding their name card and pouring their own drinks. They sit and chat to other children while eating their fruit.

Despite not having access yet to an outside play area, children have good opportunities for physical development. As an alternative, staff take children on walks in the local community. They enjoy visiting the shops to buy items for snack and walking in the nearby fields where they look at nature. Children have plenty of space indoors to move about freely. They use bikes, tunnels and balancing beams to help their development.

Children are gaining an understanding of keeping healthy through topics and discussion. For example, they identify items which help them to keep clean discussing that the shampoo and the comb are for their hair, the soap and flannel are to wash their bodies and the toothpaste, which they say 'smells nice' is for their teeth. They discuss who has cleaned their teeth this morning and children tell each other what colour their toothbrushes are.

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

The provision is good.

Children play in secure and well-maintained premises. Staff lay out the space in a suitable way, giving thought to the safety of the play areas. However, the environment lacks visual stimulation because there are limited displays at child eye level. Children benefit from good explanations about keeping safe, for example, staff remind them to walk rather than run.

Staff who prepare for all eventualities ensure children's safety. They carry out regular fire drills with the children, which they record. Several hold current first aid qualifications. For example,

when staff take children out the ratios are high, they know which children are with them and they carry a mobile phone and first aid kit. Children enjoy the use of a range of suitable toys and equipment, which are in good condition and appropriate for their age and stage of development.

Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare is important to the staff. They have a clear understanding of their responsibilities with regard to child protection. Senior staff have attended recent training in the subject and this ensures their knowledge is up to date.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school. They readily join in with their peers, forming friendships and working cooperatively. For example, one child when playing with the train track encourages other children to join in and work together. They join the rails, make bridges and as a group complete the track. Pleased with their creation they run the engines and carriages enthusiastically along the track making various train noises. Children make choices in their play and enjoy the freedom to help themselves to items from the trolley. However, not many of the resources are readily accessible and consequently self-selection is limited. Children show an interest in the activities because staff are good communicators and are skilled at extending their care and learning.

Younger children are well supported by staff who have a caring attitude and ensure their play experiences are positive. The Birth to three matters framework is developing effectively and used to plan challenging activities. The key worker system works well in practice and consequently staff know children and understand their needs. They make notes during activities and use these to keep a developmental record of each child's progress. Staff have a good relationship with the children and as a result children openly suggest ideas and express their feelings.

### **Nursery Education**

Children communicate clearly and approach adults and visitors confidently. During play, staff respond with praise and recognise their achievements and this develops their confidence and self-esteem. Children discuss things that have happened at home and enjoy bringing items for show and tell. They communicate ideas and use their imagination through role-play. For example during the inspection, the home corner is a hospital. Children pretend to be patients while others move about bandaging and using stethoscopes. There are various props including a phone and a pad to write on but very little signs or notices.

Children show a good understanding of mathematics discussing number, shape, colour and size during activities. For example, they count how many children and adults there are at register time. When talking about their bodies they count how many toes on each foot and understand that five and five equals ten. Many children can count and recognise numbers higher than ten. During play with construction blocks children count that they have fitted together seventeen. Children identify their ages from the number display on the wall. Labelling throughout the environment is limited and means that children do not have the opportunity to recognise written

word to identify areas and resources. However, children enjoy books and staff hold the book so they can see the print when reading stories. Children recognise their names from their name cards and several confidently experiment with mark making. For example, at the painting easel children peg up their piece of paper and automatically use the pencil provided to write their name on the top.

Teaching and learning are good. Senior staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They develop this through discussion, training and working with education advisors. Curriculum planning is clear and shows how the activities relate to the learning outcome. Staff understand the importance of working together on the planning and evaluation to ensure all aspects of the six areas of learning are covered to help children progress. They observe children during play and this helps them to identify their next steps.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled because staff are aware of their individual needs. For example, when playing with children they speak quietly and get down to their eye level. Children benefit from having a key person who works with them individually and liaises with their parents on all aspects of their care and development. The older children have contact books to record their educational development. However, the children under three years currently do not have a similar arrangement to record their progress. Staff have a good awareness of equality issues and work to a policy of inclusion. The premises are user-friendly with good access, parking and toilet facilities. The deputy has recently completed training in special needs and shares relevant information with the staff. As a result, they are confident in providing care for children with a range of abilities.

Children gain a knowledge of the wider world through discussion, activities and experiences. They have access to a variety of toys, which reflect diversity and positive images. Children take part in activities, which use their senses for example painting, dough and cooking. They understand about their bodies discussing that food goes into their tummy, they use their mouth to speak, nose to smell and their hands to touch. Children are confident when using the computer and have good control of the mouse. They manage a range of programmes and work either on their own or with the support of a member of staff. Children have the opportunity to find out about the local environment during regular walks in the community. The pre-school fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Staff use effective and appropriate strategies to manage children's behaviour. They deal with any incidents consistently and with good explanation. Children play well with each other, negotiating and sharing. When it is time to stop activities staff give a clear five minute warning. Children then respond to a small bell, often rung by one of them, and purposefully begin to clear away what they have been playing with. As the children are actively engaged in meaningful activities during the session, their behaviour is good.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the positive and friendly relationships, which staff have developed with their parents. The manager and her staff set aside a good amount of time each day to talk to parents. As a result, the parents are open and share useful

information about their children. The pre-school has a prospectus and maintains written policies which keep parents informed about the provision. However, the written and visual information regarding the Foundation stage curriculum and the six areas of learning is limited. Parents receive a sheet every term explaining each week's topic and most use this to reinforce items for their children to bring from home. Children's developmental folders are available and many parents look at these on a regular basis. The owner and her staff encourage parents to discuss their views and opinions. Parents are happy with the care and education provided and their positive comments reflect their satisfaction.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Staff manage their time effectively and give thought to planning a mix of interesting and appropriate activities. They arrive in time each day to set up the hall in readiness for the children. The routine flows well allowing children ample time at each activity and high staff ratios ensures plenty of individual attention. Children's records are secure, shared with parents and maintained appropriately. All mandatory documentation is in place and regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management are good. The owner takes an active role in the running of the group and delegates well to her deputy. She leads by example and consults with staff regarding the routine and activities. Senior staff have worked together for several years and as a result teamwork is good. Regular staff meetings ensure all staff discuss and evaluate their practice. During individual meetings, they reflect on their strengths, weaknesses and any training needs. As a team, they are committed to continued improvement and new ways of working. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **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 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):

- consider ways to improve the availability and self-selection of toys and resources
- consider the use of contact books for the children under three years

### **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):

- consider ways to visually improve the environment with particular regard to displaying children's work and posters at their eye level and the labelling of areas to help with recognition of simple words
- consider ways to provide further written and visual information for parents about their children's care and education

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)