



Low Hill Nursery School and Childrens Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY338170
Inspection date	07 March 2007
Inspector	Michelle Smith
Setting Address	Low Hill Nursery School, Jenks Avenue, WOLVERHAMPTON, WV10 9JN
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Registered person	Low Hill Nursery School
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Low Hill Children's Centre was registered in 2006. It is run by a sub-committee made up of representatives from the school, local authority and parents. The setting are currently developing their identity further and are known as 'Roundabout Children's Centre' by parents and professionals.

The setting operate from a childcare centre in the Low Hill area of Wolverhampton. A maximum of 72 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18:00 throughout the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 54 children aged from 6 months to 3 years on roll. Children come from the local catchment area. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs seven members of staff who work directly with the children. All staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. A Head Teacher, a Children's Centre Manager and a Childcare Coordinator are also employed.

The setting receive support from the local authority, Children's Information Service (CIS), the West Midland's Education Service for Travelling Children (WMESTC), Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust and Wolverhampton Royal Hospital. The setting are working towards 'UNICEF Baby Friendly Status'.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle from an early age. They sit at a table with their peers to eat nutritious food such as mashed potato and carrots. They eat a wide variety of fruits, for example, kiwi and strawberries for breakfast and as daily snacks. Children who attend the setting for a longer period of time eat a top-up snack later in the day which ensures they are not hungry. Drinking water is available to children at all times. Children are encouraged to find their own picture on their water bottle to make sure they are drinking from the right container. However, some of the children's pictures are blurred and not recognisable. As a result, some children drink from other children's bottle. This does not prevent the spread of infection. Through outings and projects children are developing a positive attitude towards food. They visit the local shops to buy fruit and taste their produce when they return to their playroom.

Children follow personal hygiene routines consistently and with increasing levels of independence. They wash their hands using soap and dry their hands with individual towels. Children are beginning to understand how to look after their bodies. Staff talk to children about looking after their bodies and support them to brush their teeth after lunch. Appropriate procedures are in place for ensuring that parents are informed about the administration of medication and about any accidents. In addition, many staff are first aid trained. This means any minor incidents can be dealt with effectively and children's good health is safeguarded.

Children have excellent access to outdoor activities, fresh air and light. Staff work pro-actively to ensure that a diverse, stimulating and challenging range of outdoor play opportunities are enjoyed by all. Children pedal wheeled toys and use larger pieces of climbing equipment competently. They show great pleasure as they use sweeping brushes on the decking area and build towers with bricks. Children carefully use one-handed tools such as scoops in the sand and spades in the soil, with growing dexterity and control. They use equipment such as the indoor slide with great imagination. They wriggle themselves into a safe and comfortable position in order to come down the slide lying down on their back and on their knees.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe, secure and welcoming environment. Resources are attractively displayed, clean and well maintained. Children make many choices in this child-orientated setting. Toys are effectively labelled and stored in many baskets and containers, for example, shells, pebbles, trains and paints are all available at the same time. This motivates children to learn as they follow their natural curiosity.

Children are developing a good understanding of their own personal safety. They know that putting knives in their mouth whilst they are learning to spread butter is not a good idea as they may hurt themselves. Staff have good regard for children's safety, for example, written risk assessments of the premises are in place. This helps to minimise most hazards and to protect children from harm. Children are effectively supervised for the large majority of the time. However, staff do not always see children wander through an internal door into the nursery school classroom. This increases the risk of accidents such as trapped fingers and compromises their safety. Children play happily outdoors as proper precautions have been taken to minimise any risks, for example, temporary mesh has been fixed along the decking area to reduce the risk of children slipping.

Children are protected from harm as staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's welfare. The local contact numbers for social services, together with up-to-date information on national and local procedures means that staff can react calmly and appropriately in such situations. This pro-active approach prioritises children's safe care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are motivated, keen and eager to learn. Staff have very good knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and successfully implement the framework to offer a superb range of play opportunities. They set learning objectives called 'next steps' for each child that help to bring the framework to life. Planning sheets are shared with parents and focus on how children can be supported to reach their 'next steps' target. This means that activities are enjoyable and well organised. Consequently the care, learning opportunities and play experiences for children in this setting are good.

Children of all ages take part in a stimulating range of sensory play experiences that inspire them to touch, feel and explore. They place their hands into a mix of cornflour and water, letting the mixture run between their fingers and out from their hands. They experiment by running their car wheels through the mixture and watch closely to see what happens. Staff encourage all children to join in and manage activities extremely well by using open-ended questions such as 'where' and 'how'. As a result, children are self-motivated learners and thoroughly enjoy learning in a fun indoor and outside play environment.

Children show pleasure as they sing familiar songs and rhymes. They say 'yeah' when they have completed a verse and joyfully clap their hands. They are becoming skilled in their use of

language, for example, they press buttons on electronic toys and repeat some of the sounds they hear such as 'beep, beep'. Children of all ages access books freely. They sit on cosy seating with staff and talk about what they see, extending their vocabulary and helping them to make connections with their own experiences. Children rush to play with small world toys such as trains as they enter the room. They make full use of their imagination as they walk horses over wooden bridges and pretend their train is taking people on holiday.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have very easy access to resources, toys and activities which helps them to develop an understanding of their own community and the wider world. They learn to respect each others differences and similarities as they make cards for special people on Mother's Day and push dolls around the playroom using a wheelchair. Written activity plans clearly demonstrate the commitment of the setting to provide an environment which celebrates diversity. All children are valued. Their individual needs such as dietary requirements and sleeping routines are known and respected by all staff. This together with effective settling-in procedures for all new children helps to reduce the risk of upset and confusion to children as their home care routines are mirrored as closely as possible.

Staff give children comfort and reassurance when they are upset. This helps children to settle and to become confident in the play environment. A superb relationship between the staff, parents and external agencies ensures all work together in numerous ways to provide an inclusive environment for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. All parents are kept up-to-date with their child's progress, care and welfare. A short written account of each child's day is handed to parents as they arrive. Parents and staff also talk together to make sure that all adults are working harmoniously. As a result, every child's uniqueness is celebrated.

A wide range of children's behaviour is managed sensitively. This results in a calm and caring environment in which children learn to negotiate and play together. Children are encouraged to feel good about themselves as staff use words children understand to share in their achievements, such as 'good boy' or 'well done'.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children thrive in the well-organised nursery environment. The very large majority of policies and procedures are in place and these are working very well in practice, for example, staff have a consistent approach to behaviour management issues. The attendance times of all staff and all visitors are clearly recorded. However, the system used for recording each child's time of arrival and departure is less rigorous as it does not show every child's attendance. The record of other children's attendance is not always sited appropriately when children move from one room to another. This compromises children's safety in emergency situations. All records are stored confidentially.

The setting has a clear vision for the future of the children's centre. They place a strong emphasis on the importance of free play, planning and assessment tools that allow children to develop their own learning with the support of knowledgeable, skilled staff. There are effective recruitment and vetting procedures in place. New staff undergo suitability checks and are guided through a thorough induction procedure. Children benefit from the strong team of experienced and motivated staff who give them a high level of individual attention through a successful key person system and through knowing them well.

Overall children's needs are met.

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

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.

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 good hygiene practices; this refers to the use of drinking water bottles
- assess the risks in relation to the free movement of children between the toddler room and the nursery school and take action to minimise these
- ensure records show all children's hours of attendance and improve the use of the attendance record to support fire safety procedures.

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