

Halesowen College Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253788
Inspection date	19 April 2007
Inspector	Rebecca Hadley

Setting Address	Whittingham Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3NA
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Registered person	Keith Bate
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?

Halesowen College Day Nursery opened in 1997 and is situated on the main campus of the College which is close to Halesowen Town Centre. The purpose built unit caters for the children of students and staff at the College and members of the public, subject to availability.

The setting is registered for 29 children from 2 to 5 years. There are currently 39 children on roll. This includes 27 who are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08:30 until 17:30 Monday to Thursday and 08:30 until 17:00 on Friday.

Seven members of staff work with the children. All staff have recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher mentor from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted and the setting takes steps to ensure that children are protected from the risk of infection. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection when children become ill and exclusion periods for sickness are strictly adhered to. Children are developing a good understanding of health and hygiene practices and they independently wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Children's individual health care needs are appropriately met because sickness, medication and accident records are in place.

Children are well nourished and their individual dietary requirements met. At snack times children independently help themselves to a variety of fresh fruit such as oranges, bananas and apples. Children are well hydrated because fresh drinking water is readily accessible at all times and they are able to help themselves to a drink of milk or juice at snack time. Snack and mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions when children sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each other's company. Children are learning about healthy living through a range of activities that develop their understanding of what foods are good for them. They can name good and bad foods and regularly discuss these at snack and lunch times. Children talk about different foods and guess which ones are good or bad for them eagerly shouting out the answers. For example, when asked why they eat fruit they answered "'Cus it's good for us". Children said they like chocolate and marshmallows. When asked "Are they good or bad for you?" they shouted "Bad".

Children enjoy varied opportunities to experience physical activity and develop their skills. Good opportunities are provided for children to experience fresh air as they are able to access outside at any time. They experience a range of activities such as bikes, scooters, balancing bars, slides, roller skates and climbing equipment. This enables them to develop their confidence on a wide range of equipment that provides challenge.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is well promoted. They are kept safe because the premises are secure and the outdoor area is fully enclosed. The procedures for the arrival and collection of children are well managed to ensure that they are kept safe. They are further protected as in depth risk assessments are conducted to ensure that all risks to children are minimised.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe. They are beginning to understand about safety issues both within the setting and outside during planned and spontaneous activities. They understand the importance of staying safe through visits from the road safety officer, fire officer and police. They are learning to use a zebra crossing and stop signs to help them to practise road safety.

Children's welfare is reasonably well protected as staff demonstrate an acceptable understanding of child protection policies and signs of abuse. However, although all staff are aware of the college child protection procedures some staff have a limited knowledge of local safeguarding children procedures or the action that they should take in the event of a concern about a child in their care. Therefore children's safety is potentially compromised in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, well settled, happy and comfortable in their environment. They benefit from the good knowledge of child development held by the staff which is used to help the children progress in all areas of development. Positive interactions can be seen between children and adults. Children thrive in the happy friendly atmosphere and show an obvious enjoyment of being at the setting. They actively seek out staff to share news with, to join in their games or for a hug. Children enjoy a good range of exciting and stimulating activities such as a discovery area with natural materials, construction, sand, water, books, arts and crafts, role play and a range of outdoor activities.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress because staff are enthusiastic and motivated and have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage, stepping stones and early learning goals. Planning is in place and covers all areas of learning and the stepping stones. Staff can explain how they ensure that it provides a broad range of practical activities that cover all areas of learning. Planning is currently being changed. However, at present it does not always show how children will learn from activities and activities do not link to the learning intention. Planning is not always evaluated in terms of what the children have learnt and the evaluation is not used to inform future activities or based on specific needs of individual children. Therefore this does not always ensure positive outcomes for children. Staff help children to consolidate and extend their learning. They have developed good relationships with the children, sit with them during the activities and ask open-ended questions to encourage children to think. They extend activities and take advantage of all situations to help children to learn. Good use of time and resources helps the children's learning. They are able to access all activities independently, make choices within their learning and have time to complete activities at their own pace.

Assessment of the children's learning is reasonably effective. The manager is currently looking at ways of improving assessments and is working with the teacher mentor from the local authority to implement these. However, at present assessments do not show what the children are learning and what they need to learn next. They are not always used to inform planning to help children to move forward at a pace suitable to their individual needs.

Children are interested, excited and motivated to learn. They are confident to try new activities and quickly adapt to change. For example, the setting has very recently undergone a big change. Equipment has been reorganised into specific areas and children are now able to select all activities for themselves. Children have adapted very well and one child tells every one as they arrive "It's all change at nursery". Children work harmoniously with others for example, two children work with each other to build a train track, then sit side by side as they play with the trains. They have a developing sense of awareness of their own needs and are sensitive to the needs of others. For example, an older child helps a younger child to use the glitter without being asked or prompted. All children rush to help at tidy up time and one child said "Come on it's tidy up time, we have to help". Children have good personal independence skills. They choose activities independently, select aprons themselves when they want to paint and access their snack independently, putting dirty plates and cups into the washing up bowl when they have finished.

Children use speech to organise and explore real and imagined experiences, ideas and feelings. For example, two children pretending to get married tell staff where they have brought their dresses from. One says "I got mine from Makro" and the other says "I got mine from Sainsburys". Children are beginning to understand that print carries meaning and is read from left to right. They recognise their own name and self-register as they arrive and at snack times. They enjoy looking at books either individually or with their peers and seek out staff to read to them. Children attempt writing for a variety of purposes, for example, writing letters home and posting them. They are developing very good pencil control as they trace carefully over words and pictures.

Children say and use numbers in familiar contexts. Most children are able to count to 10 and some beyond and they are beginning to recognise numbers from displays around the room. Children are beginning to use number in a meaningful context for example, when counting cups at lunchtime and numbers of fingers and toes after they have drawn round them. Children use language to describe and compare shape, position, size and quantity. They measure water and compare which container has the most in it. They can name simple shapes such as squares and circles and recreate simple patterns with pegs on a peg board.

Children investigate objects and natural materials such as corks, snake skins, pine cones, feathers, sponges, shells, wooden objects and pot puree. They look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. They experiment with torches in tents and watch changes that happen when making bread and adding water to cornflour. Children use information communication technology and programmable toys such as a computer, a cassette player, a keyboard, remote control toys and headphones. Children observe, find out about and identify features in the place they live and the natural world. They enjoy digging and planting sunflowers and vegetables in the garden, watch frogspawn turn into frogs and experience animals such as rabbits, snakes, iguanas, guinea pigs and a parrot in the college animal care department.

Children show an awareness of space for themselves and others. They can sit and stand in a space and move with co-ordination negotiating obstacles. Children recognise the importance of staying healthy. They understand that eating fruit such as pears and banana is "very very good for you" and know that they have to wear sunhats before going outside when it is hot. They can use a range of small and large equipment, such as bikes, skipping ropes, roller skates, a trampoline, scissors, and rolling pins with increasing control. Children are able to be creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, and imaginative play. They use a wide range of materials such as wool, wrapping paper, junk, glitter, pasta, lace, ribbons, sequins, doyleys, tissue and sticky paper which they are able to freely help themselves. This helps them to express their creativity. They recognise and explore how sounds can be changed, and sing simple songs from memory. They enjoy visits from students on the music course at the college who bring instruments such as electric guitars and drums for the children to listen to. Children join in with their own instruments such as cymbals, xylophones and recorders. They use their imagination in role play and stories. They use puppets to act out stories and when singing songs such as 'Incy wincy spider'. Children play at going on a picnic and getting married. One child said "I'm getting married, someone get my flower". Children put on dresses and walked around the setting telling everyone they were getting married.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern and are valued and respected as individuals. They are developing an understanding of the wider society through a range of resources and activities

including puppets, puzzles, posters and disability figures. Books depicting faiths such as Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Hindu and Sikh help children to develop an understanding of diversity. Children's individual needs are identified and met extremely well. Children with disabilities are very well supported and the setting works with parents and outside agencies to identify and support children with individual specific needs. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is good in proportion to their level of understanding and maturity. This is because staff create an environment that encourages children to respect boundaries and begin to control their own behaviour. For example, two children playing in the role play area both wanted the same doll. One said "That's my baby" the other replied "No it's my baby". The first child then said "You have it, then I'll have it" and they continued to play happily together. Children understand clear and consistent guidelines and expectations of behaviour. Staff are good role models and promote children's confidence and self esteem through positive praise and encouragement.

There are good partnerships with parents. This helps them to understand the setting's aims and practices and promotes the welfare and learning of the children. Parents are welcomed into the setting and relationships with parents are friendly. Parents are provided with information about the setting through a prospectus and notice board. Information is passed to parents verbally on a daily basis and parents happily come into the setting and chat to staff about their children. However, limited information is available with regard to 'Birth to three matters' or the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. This potentially hinders the continuity between home and nursery environments. Parents comments are positive. They say that children enjoy coming to the setting and that they are happy with the service provided.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. They receive information about their children's progress through daily conversations with staff and open days. Parents are given an overview about the Foundation Stage through the newsletter; however, this information is not readily available throughout the setting. A copy of the planning which relates to the areas of learning is available for parents to see.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The registered provider demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of the need to inform Ofsted of any significant changes. The nursery offers a warm and welcoming experience where children are happy and settled. Children's care is further enhanced by good organisation and resources to support and extend their development and learning. Staff are highly qualified, well motivated and effectively deployed to ensure that children receive a high level of care and attention. They regularly attend training to further their knowledge and expertise to ensure that children's needs are fully met. Detailed documentation is in place and regularly reviewed to ensure that requirements are met.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. They assess their own strengths and weakness through self evaluation forms and have set goals to help them achieve their objectives. Management and staff are dedicated and enthusiastic and work very well together. They are committed to providing a high level of care and education for children and are constantly looking at and implementing ways to move the setting forward. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to; ensure fire drill records are accessible, ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing and review procedures for preventing unauthorised access to the setting through the outside play area. Fire drills are regularly carried out to ensure children's safety and records are available. Children wash their hands independently at appropriate times throughout the day to prevent the spread of infection and cross-contamination. The outside is securely fenced and no persons are allowed unauthorised access to ensure children's safety.

The key issue for improvement from the nursery education inspection was to improve the organisation of the room and access to resources to all children opportunities to self-select activities and resources in all areas of learning. The setting has been completely reorganised into specific learning areas and children are able to move freely between areas independently selecting activities for themselves.

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

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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):

- ensure that all staff are fully aware of child protection issues and are able to implement policies in line with local safeguarding children procedures in the absence of a designated member of staff
- continue to develop methods to provide parents with information with regard to 'Birth to three matters' and the Foundation Stage which show how they are implemented and how children develop and learn from activities provided.

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):

- continue to develop planning, assessment and observations to ensure that children move forward at a pace suitable to their individual needs.

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