

The Hedgehog Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY317825
Inspection date	17 July 2007
Inspector	Debra, Elizabeth Mitcheson
Setting Address	Staghills Nursery School, Top Barn Lane, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 7UE
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Registered person	The Hedgehog Club
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Sessional care, Crèche

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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Hedgehog Club opened in 2006 and operates from a two-storey Children's Centre in Rossendale. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time. The service is open each weekday, 51 weeks of the year, from 08.00 until 18.00. Children are cared for in two designated rooms on the ground floor. At times, children also use the nursery school rooms. When care is provided on the first floor, an additional 18 children may use the Oak Room and the Acorn Room. Children have access to secure outdoor areas which include a purpose-designed play area and woodland.

There are currently 59 children aged from birth to five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties, and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs eight members of staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

As a recognised 'healthy school', with a healthy eating policy and 'Smiling for Life' certificate, children throughout the setting thrive as their physical, nutritional and health needs are met. They are well hydrated as they freely access drinking water from a child-sized water fountain and are well nourished at meal times. A cafeteria style approach is adopted at breakfast and snack time, where children enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables or choose to butter a slice of toast. Prepared meals at the lunch club are well balanced, as are those in the nursery, and take into account the individual and cultural needs of all children. Children talk about 'good' and 'bad' foods as they participate in story time, 'The tiger who came to tea'.

Staff follow effective health and hygiene practices and procedures to meet the children's needs, for example, stringent nappy changing procedures, routinely washing toys and equipment and regular hand washing procedures. Staff's appropriate interaction and guidance on such issues supports children's greater understanding of these issues and allows them to practice skills which help the children become independent when dealing with their own personal care. For example, they wash their hands and help wipe down tables before lunch. They also recognise that they prevent the spread of infection as they put their hands over their mouths to cough without prompting and comment 'caught the germs'.

Children test and develop physical control with the array of stimulating experiences that await them both indoors and outdoors, whatever the weather conditions. These encourage their overall physical development and desire to explore. The youngest children are confident to try out new skills, ask for help when needed and set their own limits within the safe environment. For example, they practice crawling and sitting without the support of adults. They bounce up and down on their bottoms in rhythm to the action song 'good morning' at welcome time. Older children travel around, under, over and through, and balance with ease on the climbing equipment on the outdoor obstacle course. They all recognise when they need to take a rest and cuddle up with a teddy bear in the quiet corner. Younger children are provided with a quiet area to enable individual sleep patterns to be facilitated. However, the equipment provided for children's sleep times is not always appropriate for all of the children in the baby unit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

A vast array of displayed children's artwork and child-orientated fabrics and furnishing contributes to a vibrant environment that is accessible to all users. The creative storage of toys and resources indoors and outdoors enables children to explore and make their own choices. The meticulous attention to detail in the decoration and structuring of rooms, and extended outdoor provision, presents children with exciting areas for specific aspects of play. These include imaginative, role play, exploratory, heuristic, sand, water and messy play, creative activities, music, story, language, mathematical and outdoor activities.

Children have access to a superb range of toys, equipment and play materials. These are age and size appropriate and fully support the developmental needs of children from birth to eight years. Risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. They have a good understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits, and how to involve children

effectively in organising their environment. This allows children to learn some sense of danger and gain knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm. They dry outdoor equipment with a towel without prompting after a heavy rainfall and remind each other to be careful when using an umbrella and running on the wet grass. It is encouraging to note the provision of additional staff who cover staff lunches, cooking and domestic chores. This allows staff time to work directly with the children and maintain staff to child ratios, which further supports children's safety and learning. Positive steps to safeguard children have also been taken in relation to fitting supplementary safety features, such as emergency lighting on and off the premises and security devices on all doors.

All staff have a sound understanding of their roles in relation to the setting's child protection procedure as they have completed child protection training. They understand the signs and symptoms of abuse and who to report concerns to, which for most of the staff is the manager or the setting's designated Child Protection Officer. The child protection policy is comprehensive but has not been fully updated in relation to recent regulations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All children are content and thoroughly enjoy their time at this setting. They are eager to greet their friends and staff on arrival, where they hang their coats and say a 'good morning' to all. Babies are observed to separate with ease from their parents and reach out with smiles before snuggling into the arms of their key worker. Children have access to a fantastic selection of purposeful and interesting activities which they relish. For example, they cannot wait to bury their treasure in the nursery garden. They also squeal with excitement as they make patterns with sand on top of the light box. Babies are developing into competent learners. They reach out for the excellent selection of toys and objects of interest in the heuristic treasure baskets. They stare with amazement at the delightful mobiles, and water feature that 'bubbles away' in the corner of the baby unit. Children throughout the nursery are confident in making their own decisions in what they choose to do, and eagerly participate in the activities of the day. These include welcome time, role play, dough, construction, outdoor play, dressing up, board games, jigsaws, story time, team games, music and movement and continuous provision of sand, water and paint. Activities are thoughtfully planned in relation to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. Comprehensive observations are completed and used to develop their future learning needs, following consultation with their parents.

Children are observed to play in harmony with their peers and positively support each other. For example, photographic evidence demonstrates children's understanding of caring for babies. They are observed to interact positively with them during visits to the baby unit and practice skills in caring for babies' personal needs through structured role play. They bathe, feed and play with dolls.

The staff clearly know the children well and are very aware of how they individually learn and progress. This information is used in conjunction with their knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, Foundation Stage and child development, which influences the continuing effectiveness of activities and play opportunities to extend children's progress in their physical, social, emotional and intellectual capabilities.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are captivated and inspired by an extensive range of stimulating, purposeful activities and recourses in relation to the Foundation Stage. Portfolios demonstrate how some of the children have already achieved some of the early learning goals. All children are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They listen intently to stories and can recount favourites such as 'The tiger who came to tea'. They use marks readily to represent their ideas and older children are adept at writing their own names. Children initiate making envelopes and address their letters before drawing a stamp for postage. Excellent use of visual symbols and simple sign language during welcome time enables children with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language to participate fully in the activities and make excellent progress. Children are extremely imaginative. They use plastic tubes as hoses as they imitate fire fighters and staff enhance this experience by introducing dressing up items. Children make sense of the world around them in the stimulating outdoor area and create exciting, individual artwork. A superb display of 'Merlin the Wizard' demonstrates children's interpretation of the magic potions he may have used. They are inquisitive, fascinated by how insects live, and wonder as they observe a worm wiggle in their hands; during story time in the woodland area they are happy to share their log seat with a friendly woodlouse.

Children work well together. They take turns and participate in games under the parachute and help each other with the clues leading to the whereabouts of Beep Baby, an animated monkey, during a nature trail. They operate computer equipment following the guidance of more able children and a simple picture instruction manual. Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play, and respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. Two children inform staff that there are only two slices of toast and they need one more piece for their friend. Physical skills are well developed and the opportunity to improve is through a wide variety of experiences that include music and movement, intricate obstacle courses and setting up a 'base camp' in the adjacent woodland area. These activities involve them making a tent and cooking outdoors.

Children's induction at the setting is the starting point for staff to find out about children's skills, interests and needs. They build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can in consultation with parents. A flexible approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult- and child-led activities allows them to learn at their own pace. Teaching and learning is outstanding as this qualified, very experienced staff team are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions very successfully to challenge their thinking and language skills. During outdoor play, children are asked, 'what tools do you need to bury your treasure?' Some children improvise with paper spades while others seek out large spoons and spades to hide their treasure. Staff's use of authentic natural materials promotes realistic learning experiences for the children. They also use highly effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents and carers for nursery education is outstanding, as it is throughout the setting. Parents have the opportunities to contribute significantly to their children's care, learning and play. Staff actively seek parents' views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts and this detail is recorded in the child's 'all about me' book. Staff then ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing. This includes parent days and sharing the child's portfolios, which also celebrate achievements. Children

benefit greatly from the involvement of their parents in projects which contribute to their good health, safety, development and learning as a result of the setting's 'whole centre' approach. This includes extended services such as family support, a childminder group, adult training, 'Achieving together' workshops, 'Big lads & little lads', health advice, 'Ready, steady, go', 'Bumps to babies' and massage sessions. Feedback from parents during the visit results in them speaking highly of the quality of the provision available to their children. They remark on their receipt of regular information on current and future practices planned at the setting and actively seek their opinions and suggestions regarding practice.

There are effective arrangements in place for all children, especially for those who have learning difficulties, or who have English as a second language, and those who are more able or gifted. This ensures that they are highly valued, included and treated equally and fairly. The arrangements include disabled access to the building, toileting facilities and practical hands-on experience by the staff. They are working in close partnership with parents, and centre-based and external professionals, to provide appropriate and inclusive care for all.

Children benefit from a good range of activities and resources which help them value diversity. They engage in discussions on sharing, caring for their friends and the setting which includes pet guinea pigs and a snake, and following rules in understanding how others feel. They also celebrate religious festivals which have included Chinese New Year, Divali and Easter. Participation in charity events, such as Children in Need, introduces children to individuals less fortunate than themselves. Children's behaviour is exemplary and they are clearly aware of their boundaries, as methods used for managing behaviour are developmentally appropriate and agreed with parents.

Children demonstrate very positive caring attitudes to others which are fostered by the staff team, who act as positive role models. All children are beginning to distinguish between right and wrong and adhere to the 'children's rules', for example, 'keep your hands and feet to yourself', 'help each other' and 'share and take turns'. Staff throughout the setting are enthusiastic, caring, calm and consistent in their approach. This helps promote the children's self-esteem and they delight in the praise given by the staff team for their achievements, which are recognised with verbal praise, stickers and certificates. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are settled within this well organised setting which is good at promoting their care and outstanding in relation to their learning. The staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of child development and meeting the individual needs of the children in their care. This is a result of staff being appropriately qualified in childcare and showing a strong commitment to training, which continually improves the care and maintains the education of the children at the setting.

Policies and procedures are effective and in place to provide the efficient management of children both on and off the premises, for example, behaviour, fire evacuation procedures and risk assessments. Most documentation is in place and up to date, with confidentiality being acknowledged and maintained. However, the child protection policy, attendance records, health policy and vetting procedures for assessing staff's continuation suitability have not been updated in line with recent changes in regulation.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are outstanding. Children benefit from highly qualified and skilled staff who have been effectively inducted into this area of nursery life. The excellent systems in place to monitor the highly comprehensive Foundation Stage curriculum and planning includes staff meetings, training, external support of the local Teacher Training Teams, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, detailed observations and the inclusion of parents and children in all aspects of planning. Staff are observed to regularly reflect, monitor and include differentiation of age and ability of children in daily activities, therefore improving the quality of their care and education. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first inspection since registration.

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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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 appropriate furniture is provided for all children under two to take rest or sleep
- update policies in line with recent regulations, with particular reference to child protection, system for registering children, health policy and assessing the continuing suitability of staff.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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