

# Headstart

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY246621
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Permjit Tanda
<b>Setting Address</b>	The School House, Brook Lane, Walsall Wood, Walsall, West Midlands, WS9 9NA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 453996
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Sandra Anne Masters
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Headstart nursery opened in 2002. It operates from a house within the premises of St John's Primary School in Walsall Wood. The group serves the local area.

Currently there are 73 children on roll. This includes 26 funded three-year-olds and one funded four-year-old. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:00. The out of school club opens five days a week during the school term. Sessions are from 07:30 until 09:00 and 15:00 until 18:00. The holiday play scheme opens five days a week during the school holidays, sessions are from 07:30 until 18:00.

Six staff work directly with the children of whom four hold a recognised early years qualification and two are working towards an appropriate childcare 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 have a clear understanding of why they need to follow good personal hygiene routines. They learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care through example and discussion. For example, children talk about germs on their hands and how they can make them ill. Staff prompt children well to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating meals and they understand the importance of preventing the spread of germs. Children stay healthy because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. They follow a good cleaning routine to ensure standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained at all times. They wear protective clothing when they change children's nappies and ensure toilet areas are kept clean and hygienic. Staff have a good working knowledge of the setting's health and hygiene policies and all of this helps to foster and promote children's health. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate and a first aid box is easily accessible together with the required documentation for recording accidents and medication.

Children are provided with healthy foods that appeal to them and meet their dietary needs. Lunch meals are freshly prepared, well balanced and take account of the individual needs of all children. Healthy eating is emphasised well at meal times and this helps children learn about making healthy choices. Children have access to fresh drinking water, squash and milk throughout the day. Parental wishes are listened to and acted upon and staff keep written records of children's specific dietary needs, to ensure they avoid certain foods because of allergies or preference.

Children take part in a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. Staff's good understanding of the importance of exercise, aids children's growing confidence and physical co-ordination. Children benefit from regular physical play both indoors and outside, as they take part in activities, which help test and develop their physical skills. For example, a group of children easily negotiate obstacles whilst riding the wheeled toys and show a good awareness of space. Indoors children thoroughly enjoy dance, movement and action songs.

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

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a warm and inviting environment. Children are kept safe because staff have a good awareness of health and safety issues. Staff supervise children well and are vigilant about their safety, for example, staff carry out daily visual checks of all areas including outdoors used by the children. They plan the children's environment carefully and achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits. For example, children manage the stairs safely several times a day by using the handrail provided, they understand certain rules are in place for their own safety such as riding their wheeled toys in one direction when space is limited. This allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge of how to protect themselves and others from harm.

There are effective procedures in place for the safe collection of children. Staff understand the fire procedure and the fire routine is practiced regularly with the children and recorded. All fire equipment is checked annually and meets fire safety regulations. Children have access to a broad range of resources which are safe and in good condition checked and cleaned regularly.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because established staff have a good knowledge of child protection procedures in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. New staff are supported well and have been satisfactorily trained in child protection issues.

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

The provision is good.

On arrival children are happy and eager to participate. Staff's sensitivity towards children's individuality and needs ensures that new or anxious children are skilfully settled and happy to remain. Also, the setting's policy of encouraging parents to attend initial sessions with their children allows them to become accustomed to the environment and staff. The consistent, warm and caring relationships developed by staff foster the children's trust and sense of well-being. The relaxed and child-friendly environment allows children to make confident choices and they are happy in their play.

Children clearly enjoy being at the setting, and eagerly take part in the varied stimulating and practical activities provided for their learning and enjoyment. There is a warm and caring atmosphere where children feel genuinely valued. They initiate their own play and develop this well freely selecting from the range of resources which are made easily accessible by staff daily. Younger children benefit from the same educational programme as the older children. Staff observe what the younger children do but are not recording the information on age-appropriate developmental assessments and effectively planning for their next steps in learning. Therefore whole group sessions are not always effective and on occasions younger children do not show good levels of interest. Children are often absorbed in their play, for example, children play for long periods adopting roles and playing with the small world toys. Younger children have few opportunities to build on their natural curiosity through a varied range of experiences daily such as using paint, water and sand.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy and choose from a good range of resources and activities. They have the confidence and abilities to initiate their own play and do so with ease as they move around their play room selecting what they want to play with. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and use a range of strategies to praise and value children's efforts. This contributes to well developed self-esteem and children who know the boundaries. Staff act as positive role models for the children ensuring that they explain to them why they have been praised.

All children are eager to learn because of the stimulating environment provided for them. They often sit patiently, listening intently to various stories. Children confidently participate in group discussions and are keen to answer questions about their pets and how they care for them. However, on occasions due to the varying ages within the group more able children are not sufficiently challenged and do not always show good levels of interest. Children play co-operatively in groups and are learning to speak in turn and listen to others. Children thoroughly enjoy singing and visual aids such as a spider and pretend drain pipe adds to their enjoyment when singing 'Incey wincey spider' many older children competently find their name cards and attempt to trace and copy their names. Writing materials are used well during play, for example, children freely write on labels and make pretend notes. New and familiar words linked to the theme are displayed well and helps children understand that print carries meaning. Staff emphasise sounds of letters which in turn encourages the children's interest in familiar sounds, for example children have been singing 'Alice alligator'.

Children access an interesting range of resources, which support their learning across all of the six areas of learning. Children have daily opportunities to engage in a varied range of activities to support their numeracy skills. Children spontaneously count during their play and everyday routine, for example, they count together whilst climbing the stairs. They learn to recognise numerals through puzzles, games and whilst playing in the role play area, for example, numbers displayed for children to make pretend telephone calls. Many children recognise numerals which are familiar through displays on walls, for example, children quickly line up by the number line and a child is quick to tell the adult it is number three. They play a range of interesting games such as using sorting animals to compare size, shape, colour and quantity. Everyday activities such as singing number rhymes helps them gain an interest in number and early calculation.

Children enjoy physical play which is available to them daily. They ride bicycles and cars and operate smaller equipment such as scissors with increased control. Children show interest in the way musical instruments sound. They tap out repeated simple rhythms and dance to their favourite music. Children have structured opportunities to use arts and craft material often linked to the theme. Therefore opportunities for children to freely express their own ideas through a wide range of materials are limited. The sand and water is made regularly available, however, children do not always invest their curiosity in what is available. This is sometimes due to the lack of challenge the areas offer, for example, the range of sand and water toys are limiting and do not allow more able children to explore concepts such as weight, capacity and early scientific experiments such as floating and sinking at their own leisure.

The role play area is regularly changed which allows children to act out real life situations such as being at the hairdresser's and taking their pet to the vet. Children enjoy imaginative play and adopting roles. Children show a keen interest in finding out about the natural world through themes such as mini-beasts. Children know where to look for insects and use magnifying glasses to find out more about them. Staff reinforce learning well through appropriate stories and songs which makes it fun. Children begin to learn about themselves and their homes through bringing in photos of themselves and their pets. They experience some meaningful opportunities to learn about diversity and other cultures through tasting foods and celebrating festivals and using a varied range of resources in their play.

More experienced staff have a good knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Staff work well as a team and support less experienced staff to help them support children in their learning. They plan themes for the year, a medium term plan that identifies learning objectives and these are then programmed into weekly activities. They use their written observation and assessments to assist in planning for the children's learning. Staff are beginning to record incidental observations, which are then transferred to the assessment records and the information used to inform future planning to help children to take the next steps in their learning. However, on occasions more able children are not always sufficiently challenged in some areas of learning. Staff engage children well through discussion and skilfully check their learning through appropriate questioning. The relaxed approach encourages children to freely move around the room with confidence and ease.

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

The provision is good.

All children and their families are warmly welcomed into the setting. Staff provide a caring atmosphere and have a high regard for the children. Children and their families are treated with equal concern and are valued and respected. Children have access to a varied range of

resources that depict positive images race, culture, gender and disability. This contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development being fostered effectively.

Children with specific needs are included in all activities. The staff are committed to developing the inclusion policy positively and work with parents and other agencies to deliver consistent individual programmes. Staff use their knowledge to ensure children with learning difficulties and disabilities are given opportunities to achieve at their own pace. Children's behaviour is good because staff employ consistent positive behaviour management strategies including praise and encouragement. Staff treat children with respect and provide good role models. Children display abilities to share, take turns and play co-operatively.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive basic information about the setting through a nursery prospectus and regular newsletters. They are informed of some of the policies and how to access them. Staff are available daily to take messages and give feedback to parents on their child's day and children's developmental profiles are accessible to parents if they wish to see them. Systems to share information about the educational programme being delivered and systems for parents to share what they know about their child are in its infancy.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff. The committed management team ensure standards are raised through staff professional development and ongoing training. Some staff enthusiastically increase their knowledge of child development through working towards their level three qualifications in childcare. Staff leading the educational programme are secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage and support less experienced staff well. The policies and procedures are implemented effectively by dedicated staff who enjoy the time they spend with children. Children are happy, settled and enjoy their time at the setting.

The majority of the staff team have been established for some years, with the exception of a few staff who have been recently employed. Staff records include details of vetting and qualifications but little information about recruitment. This potentially compromises children's safety. All practitioners receive an induction into the policies and procedures that govern the smooth operation of the setting. The management team are directly involved in the care of children daily and therefore are able to effectively address areas of improvement through staff monitoring and supervision. All of the relevant legally required documentation is in place and is regularly reviewed and updated.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection six actions and two recommendations were made to improve the care of children and four key issues to improve the education. All actions and key issues have been successfully addressed and therefore good progress made since the last inspection.

The organisation, safety and care of children has improved. Ofsted are informed of all significant changes and an effective operational plan and good deployment of staff means adult and child ratios are maintained at all times. Children's independence has increased and the opportunity for children to self-select resources and initiate their own play is especially evident during the

session on the second floor. An effective key worker system ensures that all children are allocated to a key person who is mainly responsible for their care on a daily basis and ensures information is exchanged with parents therefore, children's individual needs are met well. All the required policies and procedures to ensure children's welfare, care and learning are in place, including a written procedure to follow in the event of child protection. All relevant documentation is made accessible to parents and available for inspection. Staff have increased their knowledge of the Code of Practice for Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs through attending training and take positive steps to meet the needs of children with special needs.

The quality of education provided has improved. Children become increasingly self-sufficient through everyday routines through the support of adults and have opportunities to initiate their own play. Children have greater opportunities to develop their skills of early addition and subtraction through everyday situations such as meal times and through number rhymes. On the whole children are keen and motivated during story sessions because staff use a range of books, resources and visual aids to capture their interests, however, on occasions the large group and mixed ability means all children's learning needs are not always met. Effective systems have been developed to monitor and evaluate the quality of the setting, educational provision and development assessments in relation to the Foundation Stage.

One of the recommendations made has not been fully addressed. Although staff make observations of the younger children's development the assessments used to record are not age appropriate. Therefore they are not effective in helping staff plan for the children's next steps in learning. The last recommendation has been successfully addressed and therefore children learn about themselves and others through accessing a varied range of positive image resources such as dressing-up clothes, cooking utensils, ethnic dolls, books and puzzles in their play.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Ofsted received a concern on 30 January 2007 regarding a child not being given sufficient food. This relates to National Standard 3: Care, learning and play and National Standard 8: Food and drink, National Standard 11: Behaviour and National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parent and carers. In order to investigate an inspector made an unannounced visit. During the investigation the inspector interviewed the registered person, made observations, gathered evidence and inspected documents. There were no breaches of the National Standards and therefore the registered person remains qualified for registration.

## **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):

- provide increase opportunities for children to freely build on their natural curiosity through a varied range of experiences such as sand, water and paint
- observe and record what younger children do and use observations to plan the next steps for their learning and development
- further develop staff records to include information about recruitment

### **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 increase the staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage
- increase opportunities for children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves, paying particular attention to the areas of creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world
- consider the organisation of whole group sessions such as story time and circle time to ensure the children's individual learning needs are met effectively.

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)