

Heckington Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY268241
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Inspector	Christine Hands
Setting Address	Howell Road, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9RX
Telephone number	01529 469567
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Registered person	Heckington Pre-School
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Heckington Pre-school is a committee run provision that has been established for over 20 years, moving to its new premises in the grounds of St Andrew C of E school in 2003. The group currently use two port-a-cabins which comprise one large play room in each, with toilet and kitchen facilities leading off. There is access to an enclosed outdoor play area which is currently being developed. Children attending the pre-school are drawn from the village and the surrounding rural area.

The group is registered to care for no more than 38 children aged from 18 months, to under five years at any one time. It is open between 8.30am and 3.30pm, Monday to Friday, during term time, and for additional weeks during school holidays by arrangement with the Committee. Learning is based on the High Scope method and the group is now accredited.

The pre-school employs 13 members of staff. Of these, seven hold a recognised child care qualification with three more undertaking training. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children follow clear hygiene procedures in the nursery and are gaining a good understanding of how they can keep themselves healthy. They talk about germs and how 'they are so small that you can't see them and that's why we have to wash our hands really well'. Child demonstrates how to do this. Parents are given clear information as to how the pre-school protects their children from infection and are clear about times when children will not be allowed to attend. A number of staff hold first aid qualifications and there are well equipped first aid boxes on site enabling them to deal with any medical emergencies as swiftly as possible. Children receive frequent cuddles and reassurance which contributes to meeting their emotional health needs. Excellent daily cleaning routines are in place and each member of staff is aware of their responsibilities in ensuring that these are carried out ensuring that all areas, especially the toilets are kept clean and hygienic. Children are becoming aware of different types of clothing and how they can cool themselves down when they are hot, or what they need to wear if it is raining or cold.

Children have an excellent selection of healthy snacks during both sessions. Snack times are very social occasions with both staff and children sitting and eating together. Children are very involved in collecting the fruit and then helping to prepare it before putting it onto the tables for the other children, who eagerly collect what they would like to eat. Children eat very well and help themselves to a good selection from what is available. They then have a choice between water and milk to drink. Drinks are available to children throughout the session ensuring they do not become thirsty. Staff talk to parents about the types of food they supply for snacks and the importance they place on healthy eating, however at present this is not supported by the contents of children's lunch boxes. Staff are very aware of the importance of following any special dietary needs that children may have.

Children benefit greatly from the amount of time they spend in the fresh air. Unfortunately the play area they used to use is no longer available, however they are in the process of developing another area which although not currently providing the opportunities previously enjoyed does enable children to develop some of their physical skills by throwing and catching balls, using some wheeled toys and a trampoline. Use of the community swimming pool in the summer months not only enables children to increase their physical skills but also builds on their awareness of the importance of keeping themselves safe when near water. Children use comfy chairs and settees to snuggle down when they need some quiet time and any that need a sleep snuggle down on sleep mats. A screen is used to provide these children with a little privacy. Staff know the children well and are alert to individual children's needs for exercise and rest and quickly respond to this.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in safe, secure and suitable environment because risk assessments are continually undertaken resulting in staff quickly identifying and rectifying any issues. Entry into both portacabins is through a locked door with a coded entry system which can only be opened on the outside by staff. Visitors sign a book both on entry and leaving and parents sign children in as they arrive. A member of staff always stands by the door to ensure the safety of the children. The rooms are bright and displays of children's work as well as posters both at

child and adult height cover most of the walls providing an interesting and exciting environment for children. Children have their own notice board which they look at together on a daily basis. Toys and equipment are all of good quality and staff are vigilant with their cleaning and checking routines to ensure they remain clean and in good condition. Children learn to keep themselves safe by taking part in, for example, regular evacuation drills, and topics and conversations on road and water safety. They busy themselves helping to tidy away the different toys that are around and are beginning to understand the importance of looking after their environment.

Children are further safeguarded because staff have a solid understanding of their responsibilities with regard to child protection and some staff have attended training in this area. A list of important numbers is easily accessible and the latest local procedures are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school and happily join in with others as they arrive. Staff are sensitive to their varying needs and spend time reassuring any who are unhappy to leave their mums. They spend time talking to parents ensuring that they are confident to leave their children, knowing that if there are any problems they will be contacted immediately. Children excitedly talk to their friends and join in with different activities. An excellent selection of interesting activities are planned for children throughout the setting and these are supported by a wide range of toys and play equipment. Children are familiar with the routines enabling them to feel secure and in control. All resources are easily accessible and they confidently choose for themselves, often in consultation with their friends, for example when using the dressing up clothes. Activities for younger children are planned in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework which ensures they regularly play with resources that stimulate their senses such as paint, 'gloop', shaving foam, sand, water and craft. The main topics are the same with these children as with the others, however plans are adapted to ensure they fully meet their needs. Staff are very aware that it is more important to consider children's stage of development than their age and move children on to the next stage of learning in accordance with this ensuring that children are challenged accordingly. Staff respond very well to the needs of all the children and treat them with equal respect and concern. The care provided is excellent and staff throughout the pre-school are dedicated to providing a setting where all children are valued and respected.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. All staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They use their skills to motivate children and to provide an environment where they gain a love of learning. The three key workers are involved in planning and meet weekly to formulate their short term plans. All staff are fully aware of the purpose of each activity, new words that can be introduced and how they can develop the activities. The small group times are sometimes quite diverse and are well adapted to the children's individual needs. Staff are enthusiastic in whatever they do and this enthusiasm is carried through to the children making each experience an exciting opportunity for learning. Staff are confident in using a variety of teaching methods and are especially skilled at questioning and promoting conversation. Although the sessions are well planned, staff are always ready to adapt to incorporate other important issues, for example during the winter months no opportunity was lost in making maximum benefit of the snow. There is a very good balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning enabling children to use their own imaginations. Staff are skilled at knowing when to observe and when intervention may be necessary allowing

children to play independently. Resources are excellent and are placed so that children can see and access them easily. Children's progress is assessed against the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and staff observe children on an ongoing basis to build up an accurate picture of their abilities. These are then used to influence planning ensuring that their next steps are achieved as effectively as possible. Staff are very aware of the importance of looking at the individual learning patterns of children and supplying the support and challenge needed for both the less and more able children.

Children make excellent progress in all the areas of learning. They delight in listening to stories and their levels of concentration and ability to sit quietly and listen are very good. They are gaining a clear understanding of how writing can be used for a variety of reasons, for example to show which is their tray, writing letters or cards to friends and also to show how to make cookies. Most children can not only recognise their own names but also the names of some of the other children as they look at their notice board to see who is going to be responsible on that day for collecting the fruit for snacks and then helping with the serving. They are developing their independence well when choosing the activities they would like to play with such as in the home corner, playing outside or using the various craft materials. Children are learning how to care for their environment as they wipe up spills at snack time and eagerly help tidy away at the end of the various sessions. They very much enjoy their baking activities and confidently recognise the numbers on the scales as well as what they need to do to ensure that they have the correct weight. Through discussion they explain that they have to put more butter on or take some off. Mathematical language is used throughout the session as children are asked questions such as who is sitting next to, behind and in front of them. New vocabulary is used when talking to the children and they confidently speak about using goggles, flippers and snorkels when they go to the beach and want to swim under the water to look at the fish. At the end of the session children had an amazing and exciting time as they all sat on the floor with the members of staff and took hold of a large piece of lycra. This was used in a variety of ways encouraging co-operation and fun. Music plays an important part in the lives of these children as they listen to and tap out different rhythms when saying their names as well as having free access to a vast selection of musical instruments and having visitors to the setting who offer more opportunities for children to see different instruments, try playing them and listen to the different sounds. They are becoming quite skilled at recognising these. Children are confident to talk to and ask questions of all adults within the setting and confidently ask for support when needed. The area for imaginative play is well used as children dress up and use scenarios from home when playing with each other. Children are gaining new experiences as outings to the community swimming pool are made and children have the opportunity to ask questions. An excellent opportunity for children to develop their large muscles is when during the summer months they use this under the supervision of a qualified swimming instructor. By the end of their time at the pre-school a number of children will be able to swim unaided. Children use the garden for a variety of activities including planting flowers and seeds which they then look after until they have grown. This further demonstrates that everything including plants need certain things to make them grow. Children have a sense of belonging in their community as they go for frequent walks around the village, invite people into the setting to talk to them such as the music man and people with animals. As local residents pass the playground they often wave to the children which again gives a feeling of community. They are comfortable with technology and are becoming skilled in using a selection of information and communication equipment as well as becoming skilled at using the computer. Children enjoy all types of messy play and have great fun with shaving foam making roads for their cars, creating mountains and writing in it. Children use their imaginations as they paint but also at

times paint a picture that has been asked of them, although even with this they decide how they want to do it. This is such a busy, happy group that the learning opportunities are endless.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff welcome all children into the setting and value them as individuals. Before children start at the setting staff gather as much information as possible about the children and their families through both written information and talking to the parents and this is continually being updated to ensure they have a clear understanding of the children's differing needs. Resources within the provision show positive images of all members of society and the wider world. Children are learning about their own and differing cultures through stories and conversation as well as a variety of celebrations such as Christmas, mother's day, Chinese new year and Diwali. Staff are very sensitive to how information is given to children, for example when activities are based around children who may be less fortunate than themselves. This has resulted in the past in different fund raising activities including one for terminally ill children. Staff regularly take children for walks around the village such as to collect the fruit for snacks and visit the local park. They are such a well known group that local people stop and talk to them both whilst they are out as well as when playing in their play area which demonstrates to children they belong to a community. Children have high self esteem and this is fostered at every opportunity to make them feel good about themselves, for example as they all sing happy birthday and blow out candles on 'their cake', to giving them time to talk to others about things that may have happened at home. Because staff have a good understanding of how children develop and want to provide the best learning opportunities for them, they do not hesitate to speak to parents if they have any concerns and in this way outside help is obtained. Children with learning difficulties are included very well and staff work closely with parents and all the agencies involved so that their needs are met. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and as a result they generally behave very well. Any incidents of undesirable behaviour are dealt with calmly and firmly and staff spend time trying to support them to manage their own behaviour. The consistent use of praise encourages children to do their best and behave well as do discussions about feelings.

Parents are very happy about the care their children receive whilst at the setting as well as the information they receive. They feel confident leaving their children and say that they value the photographs they receive which confirms that their children are happy even if they were crying when they left them. They appreciate the written information they receive which includes a parent pack when they first start, newsletters and activity plans. Younger children go home each day with a diary that lets parents know about what they have been doing, any nappy changes or sleeps they may have had. The partnership with parents and carers regarding nursery education is outstanding. Parents are provided with information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the regular parents evenings provide them with the opportunity to talk to staff, look at their children's assessment records and see how they learn. Parents are also made aware that staff are available at all times and a Friday afternoon has been set aside for any lengthy talks between the supervisor and parents. Along with the activity plans given to parents they are informed of ways that they can further support their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the pre-school contributes greatly to children's welfare. This is a community group where both staff and committee each have their roles whilst being very supportive of each other. Procedures for employing staff are robust as are the induction procedures and appraisal systems ensuring that all staff working at the pre-school are qualified, working towards a qualification or are experienced and all are committed to providing the best quality care for the children. Training is considered to be of great importance and staff regularly undertake this to further their development and keep up to date with any changes in child care practice. Staff work exceptionally well as a team and regular staff meetings enable them to discuss and resolve any issues. Deployment of staff is well thought out and staff are swiftly redeployed if necessary to ensure children's well-being is maintained at all times. All the necessary records are well maintained and policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. This provides a strong framework for the care of children. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The pre-school has built very good relationships with local authority advisers and consults with them regularly. The manager provides clear leadership and works closely with staff to monitor and evaluate the provision on an ongoing basis. They continually look at ways as to how they can develop and improve the provision and have a clear vision for the future.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure that parents were fully aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a complaint or concern. A poster is now in place giving all contact details of the regulator which enables them to express any concerns they may have regarding the care of their children.

The provider was also asked to ensure that staff further develop children's individual records to show individual progression and evaluations to show how the children are grouped, how staff are deployed, what resources are being used and what needs to happen next to progress the activity. Children are grouped with their key workers for focus activities and staff use the knowledge they have of these children along with their assessment records to provide activities that will provide challenge.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

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):

- further develop communication with parents with regard to healthy eating.

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