

# Highfield Day Nursery and Link Club

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	303440
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 October 2007
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Highfield Day Nursery and Link Club opened in 1992. It is one of two nurseries owned by an informal partnership and operates from a converted building situated in Widnes, Cheshire. Children are cared for in five rooms located on two floors. A maximum of 95 children may attend the provision at any one time. The provision is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 88 children aged from six months to under eight years on roll. Of these, 25 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 23 staff including the manager. Of these, 16 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two staff are working towards a recognised qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children remain healthy because of the effective practices in place. Staff wear protective clothing during nappy changing and food handling procedures, using the hand sanitiser at regular intervals. Consistent and hygienic practices for the cleaning of surfaces and equipment contribute to the healthy environment. Children develop an understanding that washing their hands at regular times keeps them healthy and they confidently explain this is to 'get rid of germs which can make you ill'. There is a good level of information about children's illnesses and exclusion periods on display, and a number of staff have completed first aid training, which further safeguards the children's welfare.

Children take part in a good level of regular physical activity. They develop their large skills as they climb, balance and ride using various play materials. They negotiate space indoors and outdoors as they manoeuvre the wheeled toys using their feet or pedals. They repeat intended movements as they take part in familiar action rhymes using their hands and feet. Babies develop their walking skills, by crawling around the good space available and use furniture to pull themselves to standing. They experience fresh air regularly as they are taken for walks in the garden. Children attending the link club visit the local sports centre to take part in more rigorous activities, such as basketball and tennis. As a result, children develop a positive understanding of how physical activity contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

Children enjoy a healthy nutritional diet. The three week rotating menus on display outline the meals provided, which incorporates fresh fruit daily. The nursery has been awarded a certificate of excellence from environmental health regarding food safety and an award for sugar free snacks from the dental health. Children attending the link club bring their own lunch box which is stored in accordance with food safety regulations. Children have access to drinking water or milk at regular intervals. Snack times provide a socially interactive time for all children. They sit in smaller groups with staff who provide the necessary support. However, children are not always provided with plates at snack time and they do not have independent access to drinking water.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the well-maintained and child friendly environment. The display of children's artwork in their rooms and corridors contribute to their sense of belonging. The good level of information on display keeps parents informed of procedures and contributes to the welcoming environment. Children's rooms and associated facilities are generally organised to meet their needs. However, the design of the children's toilets means cubicles are not fitted with doors, therefore, children's privacy and dignity is not always respected.

Children have access to a wide range of age appropriate play materials to positively support and challenge their learning. Children can self-select play materials of their choice from the storage units in place, which contributes to the development of their independence skills. Resources are regularly changed during the day to sustain children's interest and enjoyment.

Children remain safe in the setting because potential hazards are assessed and the procedures and equipment in place minimise risks to children. For example, the detailed risk assessments

are on display and completed prior to outings. Children learn to keep themselves safe as the staff inform them of potential dangers and explain the consequences of their actions. Fire drills are carried out with the children, but these are infrequent. Children's welfare is sufficiently safeguarded because some staff have attended training in child protection. They recognise signs and understand the basic procedures for reporting concerns.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and secure in the provision. Most children enter the setting confidently and quickly become engrossed in the play and activities. Less confident children are supported well by their key worker and positive relationships are developing. Babies and young children rest and sleep according to their needs, and routines from home are shared, which provides a consistent approach to their care. Children under two years have opportunities to explore their environment and play materials under close supervision. They interact well with staff who support and extend their learning. They develop a sense of self as they look at their reflections in low level mirrors and staff respond well to their gurgles and gestures to promote their communication skills.

Minimal activity planning is in place for children under two, although a wide range of play opportunities are provided, including sensory and creative activities, such as sand, water and paint. The activity planning for children over two is linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Older children show good imagination skills as they take on the role of the doctor and improvise using the toy drill as a hairdryer for the dolls. Current themes, such as 'autumn', 'Halloween' and 'our bodies' are evident from the friezes on display. School age children are consulted about activities and a structured timetable of events are prepared for school holidays. This includes visits to places of interest, crafts, and the involvement of visitors, such as the 'bird man'.

All staff have attended 'Birth to three matters' training and some have developed a sound understanding of the framework. They are beginning to use observation sheets, the 'I can do' records, examples of children's artwork and photographs to monitor their progress. However, this approach is not consistent in all rooms.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are making steady progress across the six areas of learning. Staff support the children well; listening, responding and asking meaningful questions to develop and extend their learning. They organise the indoor environment well to promote all areas of learning, although this is not yet extended to the outdoor area. Plans confirm children receive a balanced and varied curriculum, taking into account their interests and ideas. Some observations of the children include recommendations for further learning and development, but this is inconsistent. There is some good evidence available to demonstrate children's progress, such as individual summary reports, workbooks and photographic evidence of displays. However, children's assessment records are not completed on a regular basis and lack necessary information about their ongoing development.

Children are learning social skills and developing positive relationships with their peers. They show respect for others, for example, as one child politely asks a group of children if she can join in their play. Children are beginning to develop self-help skills, such as seeing to their own personal needs. They show good communication skills and have interesting conversations with

staff, for example, about their recent trip to Manchester. They listen with interest to stories read by staff and respond confidently to questions. Children competently recognise letters on their name card and demonstrate early writing skills as they label their own work. Children are beginning to develop some understanding of mathematics as they learn to count, recognise shapes and use various resources in the 'maths corner'. They enjoy joining in with number rhymes, but there are few opportunities for them to learn about simple calculation in everyday situations.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing well. They take part in activities to help them learn about other countries and they are learning some basic words in French. They collect interesting items on their 'autumn walk' and examine them using the magnifying glass, and show skill as they access the computer. Children demonstrate sound coordination skills, as they chase balls in the garden, pedal the wheeled toys and practise hopping on one foot. They are beginning to learn about the benefits of healthy living, for example, they explain milk is good for their teeth and makes their arms strong. Children show their creative skills as they enjoy gluing various textured items to create their own picture. They make good use of the inviting home corner, playing imaginatively as they pretend to prepare dinner.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff recognise children's individual preferences and accommodate their needs well. They develop warm and supportive relationships and encourage children to make choices in their play. Children access a good range of multicultural dressing up clothes and take part in activities to promote their awareness and understanding of diversity. They use a variety of resources and the images displayed around the nursery help them to develop a positive view of the wider world. An information file regarding children with learning difficulties and disabilities is available for staff use, and there are two staff members with designated responsibility for promoting their care and welfare.

Staff act as good role models in encouraging positive behaviour. They treat children with respect and praise them for their efforts. As a result, children are polite, cooperative and well behaved. Older children show concern for others as they play in the home corner and young children show pleasure in their own achievements, for example, as one child claps when he builds a tower. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff regularly share practices and routines with parents to ensure consistency in the children's care. The day books used for children under three years are informative and parents' evenings have been introduced to share information about children's progress in their learning. The nursery prospectus is currently in the process of being updated, but there is very little information on display to inform parents about the educational programme. Also, summary reports about children's progress are not shared with parents on a regular basis. The complaints policy does not reflect current legislation and a system to record complaints is not yet implemented. Feedback from parents is valued and parent questionnaires are generally issued on an annual basis. Parents speak very highly about the nursery, particularly about the staff and their care of the children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision is organised sufficiently well to ensure children are healthy, safe and well cared for. A number of staff have worked in the nursery for many years, which benefits the children's care and provides consistency for them and their parents. Staff have opportunities to attend ongoing training to enhance their skills, and knowledge gained by attending courses is shared amongst the staff team. Staff are kept informed of issues, such as via room leader meetings and the staff newsletter, and managers have introduced 'employee of the month' to recognise individual achievements.

In the main, sufficient staff ratios are maintained across the nursery, and the manager and deputy are available to offer assistance if needed. However, for short periods, minimum ratios are not always met in some children's rooms. Staff confirm they are not left unsupervised with children until appropriate clearance is complete and evidence is generally available regarding their suitability, but details relating to a small number of staff are missing. Also, evidence regarding staff qualifications is not always readily available. Most documentation and records to promote the safety and welfare of children are maintained appropriately. Satisfactory policies and procedures are available to reflect positive practice and ensure the provision is managed efficiently.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager and deputy support the staff well and encourage their ongoing professional development. They are open to ideas and suggestions from staff and have reorganised the pre-school room to improve learning experiences for children. Some informal systems are in place to monitor the delivery of the educational programme, such as reviewing plans and observing staff practice, but gaps in the recording of children's assessments have been overlooked. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, issues identified as areas for improvement related to planning activities, documentation, safety issues regarding the kitchen and laundry areas, and staff knowledge of child protection. These issues have been appropriately addressed. Planning systems have been introduced so that children take part in a range of activities to meet their needs. Most documentation is maintained appropriately and made available for inspection. Children's safety has improved because doors leading to the kitchen and laundry areas have been fitted with high locks to prevent access, and some staff have attended basic child protection training to develop their knowledge and understanding in this area.

At the last nursery education inspection, issues identified as areas for improvement related to planning and assessment, promoting children's independence, and sharing information with parents about children's progress. These issues have been appropriately addressed. Staff observe and assess children's development and promote their independence skills by encouraging them to try things for themselves. They have reorganised the daily routines and planned the educational programme so that children are involved in a range of play and learning opportunities. Verbal information about children's ongoing attainment is shared with parents on a daily basis and the nursery have introduced parents' evenings to discuss children's progress and developmental records. This has improved partnership with parents.

## Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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):

- improve children's privacy when accessing the toilets and ensure fire drills are conducted on a more frequent basis
- continue to develop a consistent approach using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities and record children's development
- review and update the complaints policy in line with current regulation and implement a system for recording complaints made by parents
- improve procedures for recording evidence of staff clearance and keep information on file regarding staff qualifications.

### 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):

- make sure children's assessment records are completed regularly and kept up to date
- further promote children's understanding of simple calculation in everyday situations and extend their learning in the outdoor area
- develop information for parents about the educational programme and make sure children's summary reports are shared on a more regular basis.

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)