

HGS Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	400104
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Inspector	Christine Anne Rice
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Registered person	Susan and Andrew Seeber
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

HGS Nursery Limited opened in 1990. It is a privately owned day nursery operating from six rooms within a single-storey, portable unit. The nursery is set on the edge of playing fields in the grounds of Harrogate Grammar School. Children attending are mainly from the local community.

A maximum of 38 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00, and earlier by appointment, to 18.00 all year round except for bank holidays. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 36 children aged from 3 months to under 5 years on roll. Funding for nursery education is received by 15 of these children.

The nursery employs nine full-time and two part-time staff. Of these, six staff including the manager hold NVQ level 3. Several staff are embarking on further appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority early years consultant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children's health is promoted as the staff follow good hygiene routines. For example, all tables are cleaned before and after snacks and staff wear gloves and aprons to change nappies. Children wash their hands at appropriate times, such as before eating and after using the toilet. The children's health is further protected by the setting's comprehensive sickness and administration of medicines policies. Most of the staff hold a current first aid certificate and there is a fully stocked first aid kit, plus an accident record, which the parents generally sign, although a few signatures are missing. Medical information is sought from parents and the setting is very careful to ensure that the children's individual needs are met, such as with regard to allergies.

Children benefit from eating healthy snacks, such as a variety of fruit and vegetables, including apples, pears, bananas, grapes, peppers and cucumber. They learn about healthy eating through stories and being involved in the preparation of food, such as pizzas and fresh fruit salad. Lunch is freshly cooked on the premises and careful thought is given to the menus to ensure that the children enjoy a variety of nutritious food, such as chicken korma with rice, peas, carrots and sweet corn, followed by fruit and jelly. Children stay hydrated as they have access to drinks at all times from individual named water bottles. At snack time the children develop independence as they choose between water and milk and pour their own drinks from jugs.

The children have daily opportunities for fresh air and large physical exercise since they have access to an outdoor area, which incorporates an all weather surface. In addition, the children may access the adjacent school field at certain times of the day and they go for walks to local playgrounds plus nature reserves. Here the children develop their physical skills, including climbing, running, and balancing on stilts. They walk on giant feet and ride bikes confidently, negotiating a pathway around obstacles, adjusting their speed by slowing when they approach another child and speeding up again when there is an empty space. By throwing and making good attempts to catch balls, children demonstrate increasing control over objects and develop hand-eye coordination skills. Fine motor skills are developed when the children draw with pencil crayons.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and well-organised environment, where there is good evidence of their play and activities. For example, the children's rain forest and holiday displays adorn the walls. The provision is welcoming and there is a good range of age appropriate resources to stimulate the children. These include rattles, shape sorters, bricks, train sets, cars, paints and sand and water play. Toys and books are rotated regularly to maintain the children's interest. Children develop independence as they choose their own activities from the toys and equipment, which are easily accessible and stored at child height. All the children have the opportunity to play outdoors at different times of the day, though this facility is rather limited.

Children benefit from a good range of resources, which promote their development. For instance, there are age appropriate utensils for eating, child sized tables and chairs, cushions and a small sofa for children to relax and look at books. There is a separate sleeping area, well-equipped with cots and sleeping mats for older children. Since staff are very safety conscious, potential

hazards are minimised and the children are safeguarded. For example, the staff are careful to check sleeping babies every fifteen minutes, risk assessments are carried out daily indoors and outdoors, the front door is securely locked and all visitors are monitored. The children are learning to contribute to their own safety as they regularly practise the fire escape plan, which is duly recorded.

The children's welfare is protected further because there is a good standard of knowledge of child protection matters within the setting. There is a written child protection policy, which is shared with parents and staff understand the procedures to follow if they have any relevant concerns. As well as covering child protection during their induction, all staff have completed additional training courses.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The provision meets the needs of all ages attending and the children enjoy access to a good range of activities and resources, such as the home corner, paints, dough modelling, construction toys, jigsaws, books, and dressing up clothes. Children benefit from the family atmosphere as they become familiar with all the staff, not just their key workers, which eases the transition between rooms. In addition, the staff complete daily information sheets for the parents when children move rooms.

Children profit from the staff's knowledge and training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. The framework, which influences practice and the planning for the younger children, is an integral part of the assessment and observation process. Good individual records are maintained with photographs and detailed illustrative examples of the children's work.

The staff are sensitive to the children's needs and help them to settle and feel secure by providing reassuring cuddles. Babies form close bonds, which aids their emotional security. Some children snuggle up to staff to read stories. Other children like to wave to their parents and staff oblige by helping them find a suitable window. Children happily chat with the staff and approach them easily, such as when they need extra help to undo the zips on their coats.

The children are busily engaged in a range of experiences. For example, the babies have fun splashing with the water, the toddlers share a story, the 'tweenies' paint circles and rectangles and the pre-school children build a train track. The children enjoy a balance of active and more quiet times, as they enjoy outdoor play and walks to the local playground and nature reserve, plus quiet circle times. The staff support the children in their play. For instance, when the children choose to play with the cars, the staff find them a large wooden garage. The children gain in confidence and self-esteem as the staff praise them for their work, such as their colourful paintings.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a reasonable knowledge of the Foundation Stage, which underpins their practice and enables them to provide a range of activities to support children's learning across the six areas of the curriculum. All staff share in the formulation of plans for the setting and evaluate activities to inform future practice. There are medium term plans outlining how the curriculum is to be covered with short term plans detailing focussed activities and their learning objectives. However, there is a lack of

differentiation to provide more challenge for older and more able children. Assessment systems show the children's starting points and monitor the children's progress in each area of learning.

Counting and an interest in numbers is a strong feature of the setting with many children confidently and reliably counting way beyond ten. Some children count spontaneously in their play, such as when they are looking at a book. Children use size and positional language competently, recognising that their sleeves are short and the cars are underneath the cupboard. They are interested in shape and able to spot that the wall clock is a circle. However, there are few opportunities for children to practise simple mathematical calculations, for instance, at snack time.

Children make themselves comfortable in the book corner before choosing favourite books to look at, carefully turning the pages and 'reading' from left to right. They use pencil crayons to make marks and draw, though the mark making area, which is not a central focus, does not attract a lot of children. Children ascribe meaning to marks as they paint dolphins. They begin to recognise words as they self register for snacks. However, there are few opportunities to link sounds and letters. Children are learning to communicate well and talk through their activities, for example, when they are playing pirates. They happily recount their weekend experiences to the group, describing a trip to a museum.

The children are curious, they confidently approach adults to enquire what is happening. They independently choose activities and proudly show staff the shapes they link together. Many children persevere with their activities for sustained periods of time, such as when they play with the pirate ship. They take responsibility for their personal care by helping themselves to tissues when necessary. The children develop a sense of belonging as they hang their coats up on their pegs and share their news with the group. They seek out friends to play pirates with and play cooperatively, taking turns to look out of the window at the tractor.

Children develop knowledge and understanding of the world as they use microscopes to look at dragonflies. The children show an interest in how things work as they explain how their toys operate. The children talk about what they see, noticing the weather conditions and they diagnose a noise they hear outdoors as that of a lawn mower. They have a sense of time, knowing when they come to nursery and when they go home and differentiate between past and present as they describe going to a wedding last weekend. They make links with their community by learning about the work of people who help us, such as fire fighters, dentists and the police.

The children's creativity is developed through a range of activities. For instance, the children enjoy mixing colours to paint and can distinguish primary colours. Some children are able to recognise more sophisticated colours, such as the gold and dark green of a parrot. They make interesting collages of animals and enjoy singing favourite songs, joining in the actions to 'Wind the bobbin up'. The children enjoy dressing up and imaginative play, pretending that the carpet is the sea as they 'sail' their pirate ship over it.

Overall, children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are respected and their individuality recognised, in accordance with the setting's equal opportunities policy. Children learn about their community and the wider world through

activities, such as visits to their primary school, library and local shops. They make their own contribution through fund raising for charities, such as a sponsored toddle for Barnados. Additionally, visitors, such as fire fighters and police officers are welcomed to the setting. Children gain positive images of diversity through sampling foods from different cultures and through access to a good range of resources, such as books, toys, a braille poster and various activities, for instance, learning to sign. Parents contribute by sharing details of their culture with the children, such as Japanese food and the national dress. Furthermore, the children learn about the children in Cambodia, whom the provision sponsor. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcome in the setting, which has effective arrangements in place to assure their care. For example, the nursery has a trained Special Educational Needs Coordinator and staff work in partnership with parents and professionals to meet the children's particular needs. Positive and consistent behaviour management strategies are adopted throughout the nursery. For example, the children are praised for good behaviour and receive stickers as rewards. Staff act as good role models, encouraging children to be polite to one another. As a result, children are cooperative and behave well.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. There are flexible settling procedures and parents receive an informative introductory brochure when the children join the provision. Parents may freely access the setting's policies, which are available on the notice board in the entrance. They receive a good amount of information about the Foundation Stage and are encouraged to provide information about their children in an 'All about me' brochure. Parents are kept informed about their children's progress as they can see their children's records at any time and discuss their children's progress at parents' evenings. In addition, there are monthly newsletters plus daily opportunities for verbal information exchanges between the staff and parents, at the beginning and end of the session. The setting welcomes the parents' support of their children's learning through bringing in items from home, particularly for 'show and tell' activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision is well organised by the manager and deputy, with suitably qualified supervisors assigned to each of the rooms. The staff work well as a team, staggering their breaks to ensure that the children are always properly supervised. The adult-child ratio is generous and positively supports the children's care, learning and play. Children benefit from the comprehensive range of policies and procedures, which provide a structure for the safe and efficient management of the setting. All of the required documentation is in place and is stored securely to maintain confidentiality. The registration certificate is clearly displayed in the entrance hall.

Thorough recruitment procedures are followed to ensure that staff who work with the children are suitable to do so, for example, background checks are carried out and references taken up. Practical induction procedures ensure that new staff are well prepared for their roles. The staff, who have yearly appraisals, are keen to update their training and are encouraged to pursue further courses.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The staff have regular meetings and work together to plan the nursery's activities. They work with an advisory teacher from the local authority to develop their practice. All staff contribute to assessment by making observations and adding these to the children's records. Staff recognise the need to develop

the outdoor area to improve the learning opportunities for children and there are plans to do so.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the provision was asked to improve the lunchtime routine, the strategies used to manage children's behaviour and the details in some of the procedures. In addition, the provision was asked to increase the frequency of fire drills and risk assess the use of plastic chairs.

Since the last inspection, the provision has improved the lunchtime routine, as a member of staff sits down to eat and socialise with the children. There is a revised policy to ensure that behaviour is managed consistently and the relevant procedures have been updated. Fire drills are regularly practised every three months and risk assessments have been carried out on the chairs with the result that some new resources have been purchased. The combined effect of these changes is that there has been a positive effect on the children's safety and comfort and there are more opportunities for the children to socially interact with the staff. In addition, the children's behaviour has improved.

At the last education inspection, the provision was asked to plan activities to develop the children's mathematical awareness and to use positive teaching methods to manage the children's behaviour.

Since the last education inspection, the provision has increased the number of mathematical activities and has changed the management of the children's behaviour with the use of positive strategies. These changes positively impact on the children's education as their behaviour and mathematical abilities are improved.

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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 the parents sign their children's accident record.

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):

- include differentiation in planning to provide more challenge for older and more able children
- increase opportunities for children to practise simple calculations, for example, at snack time
- increase opportunities for children to link sounds with letters
- develop the outdoor area to enhance the learning opportunities for the children (applies to care section also.)

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