

High Bank Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY259723
Inspection date	05 July 2007
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Registered person	High Bank Nursery
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

High Bank Nursery opened in 2003 and is a privately owned provision. It operates from five rooms in a fully renovated building on a working farm close to Darlington. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery serves the local and surrounding communities.

There are currently 146 children aged from five months to 10 years on roll. Of these, 42 children receive funding for early education.

The nursery employs 20 members of staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications and five are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children use the very attractive outdoor environment daily. They enjoy a well planned variety of both indoor and outdoor physical play experiences. They love the freedom of movement offered outdoors and use space well to develop their physical skills. They enjoy riding back and forth on the bikes, run fast enjoying the fresh air. Children use the large climbing frame and balancing beams with agility and confidence. They have regular planned opportunities to develop coordination and control, as they attempt forward rolls and hop on one leg. Toddlers love clambering on the play boat outdoors. Babies and toddlers have sturdy toys to push along to support their developing mobility. Free flow play for pre-school children is enjoyed outdoors and indoors giving children the choice of what they want to do. Older children in the out of school club access different outdoor areas when they are not in use by younger children.

The nursery environment is very bright and well maintained. Priority is given to children's health and most staff implement good health and hygiene practices. However, the procedures for disposing of nappies in the 'tweenie' room are not effective. This means good hygiene practices are not fully promoted. Parents are clearly informed that sick children cannot be cared for, so that children are protected from infection. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication fully meet requirements and effectively protect children. Children clearly understand why they need to wash their hands after using the toilet. However, staff do not consistently promote children's awareness of good hygiene prior to snack time, for example, hand washing using soap. Children are developing high levels of independence in attending to their own personal care, as they manage the toilet independently and put on their own coats. Opportunities to rest and sleep are planned in line with children's needs and home routines which are agreed with parents. Staff evidently know children well and understand when they are feeling tired.

Parents are fully consulted about their child's health and dietary needs. Children enjoy a varied menu of freshly cooked, healthy food including organic milk, fruit, and vegetables. Menus are clearly displayed for parents. Children are encouraged to try a wide variety of different foods, including lots of vegetables and fruits. They are encouraged to express their likes and dislikes. They are involved in some food preparation, for example, they chop the fruit for the fruit salad at snack time. Snack and lunch times are pleasurable, relaxed occasions, where staff and children sit together, sociably sharing conversation. Children's awareness of healthy eating is promoted well within planning. Younger children and babies become independent in feeding themselves. Older children pour drinks independently from the water jug and the drinks dispenser.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery offers a very welcoming and completely child-focused environment, where children are safe and secure. Staff show a good level of awareness of safety issues and are mostly effective in ensuring all areas of the nursery are safe. Risks, both indoors and out, are identified and minimised, without limiting challenge. Children enjoy their play in an environment where space is effectively organised to allow children to move around safely, freely and independently. Organisation of the daily routine carefully considers the safety needs of children of different ages. For example, a specific area is designated for use by the older children attending the out of school club. Children's safety and welfare are enhanced by good supervision and very high

priority is given to security of the premises. Procedures to ensure safe evacuation in the event of an emergency are very well-considered.

Children learn to use the well-planned space purposefully and with confidence. A wide and well-balanced range of good quality resources is stored at child height so that children can select them safely and without help. Appropriate risk assessments are conducted routinely and practice is consistently monitored and evaluated to increase children's safe and independent participation in everyday activities. Staff understand the importance of an environment where there is a good balance between freedom and safe limits. They explain safe practices to children and routinely remind them of safety rules, for example, when using the scissors. Good supervision encourages children to become familiar with expected behaviour; they learn to tidy away toys to keep the nursery environment safer. Consistent reminders about rules help children begin to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. For example, they sensibly take turns on the climbing frame steps and know they must line up when going in and out of the building.

Children are sensitively supported to share their feelings and make their needs known. They are cared for by staff who give high priority to protecting children and keeping them safe. Most staff have updated their knowledge and understanding of child protection issues by attending appropriate training courses. Their clear understanding of their responsibilities within child protection procedures helps to ensure that children are effectively protected and their welfare safeguarded. There is a comprehensive written child protection policy in place which is shared effectively with parents

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very confident and clearly enjoy being at nursery, which is largely due to the easy and relaxed interaction between staff and children in all age groups. They approach activities with great interest and regularly link up with others to join their play. Communication skills with children are well supported through good adult-to-child interactions. Staff encourage children to talk about what they are doing and sensitively support their language development. Children attending after school and during the holidays are enthusiastic and very much at home. They choose many of their own activities and make suggestions which staff are very happy about as this ensures children use their initiative and develop their own ideas. Children have firm friendship groups and play well cooperatively, particularly during outdoor games and imaginative play. They also take part in a full range of very interesting outings in the school holidays.

The provision for children under three is good and most staff have attended training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children's written developmental records link with the components of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children under three are welcomed into nursery by warm, friendly staff who actively listen and respond enthusiastically to their sounds, body language and facial expressions. Staff are genuinely fond of the children, and this is well reflected in the great trust shown as children approach familiar staff confidently for cuddles and reassurance. Children's self-esteem is developing as a result of the staff encouraging and praising them and valuing what they have to offer. Children's creative development is well supported by staff who provide sensory equipment, and frequent access to medium, such as paint, sand and water. Staff have created an interesting environment for small children; they are stimulated by different textures displayed on walls and explore a wealth of tactile play. Staff allow for flexibility in play routines so that children are able to pursue their own interests, which minimises conflict or upset. Children develop early mark making skills through use of

large chunky crayons and chinks, they have good, regular access to stimulating resources, such as coloured bricks which they use to match, sort and identify colours. Children's independence at mealtimes is positively encouraged as staff allow them the freedom to feed themselves. Toddlers enjoy looking at books and are beginning to recognise colour and shape. They thoroughly enjoy playing in the water tray filled with shiny sequins and making sand prints.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. They enjoy their time at nursery and achieve well because staff use their good understanding of the early years curriculum to provide appropriate challenge for all children. Staff have received some relevant training and are confident in the delivery of the curriculum. A broad and balanced range of activities are planned across all six areas of learning in order to meet children's individual learning needs. Children's thoughts and ideas are included in the planning of activities. Assessment records which link children's progress to the stepping stones are in place, are dated to show children's progress and used to plan for children's individual learning needs. Observations are used effectively to plan next steps in learning, and, effectively influence the focus of teaching in planned activities and group times. However, the records of focussed activities do not show clear differentiation for all children. Staff use good questioning skills to challenge children and further extend their thoughts and ideas. They involve themselves appropriately in children's activities and offer good support and praise to them.

Children love coming to the nursery; they make friends and play together co-operatively. They develop self-confidence and learn to concentrate and persevere with activities they enjoy. Children learn to communicate their needs and ideas well. They have good relationships with staff and are developing their relationships with each other. Children make connections between nursery and home life and are developing a good understanding of other cultures and beliefs. They learn about the local community through the use of interesting resources and planned activities. Children enjoy books and begin to listen attentively to stories and instructions. They enjoy a print rich environment and have many opportunities to write for real purposes and develop good mark making skills with most children writing letters in their name. Older children begin to link sounds and letters and count confidently to 10. They use numbers in everyday activities, for example, as they count how many children are going to play outside. They begin to use comparative size and positional language independently in their construction play.

Children's interest in the natural world, growth and change is stimulated well. They plant seeds, beans, sunflowers, and understand that plants need water to grow. Children enjoy digging for worms in the soil outdoors. They develop an interest in technology as they use the computer, use digital cameras and other programmable toys. Children's imagination and creativity is nurtured as they enjoy extended role play activities in the 'safari park', and explore with play dough. Children use their imagination very well in their play. They sing and dance to music and join in their favourite songs. They have regular access to musical instruments and use them rhythmically. Children recognise and name many colours and mix them to create other colours. They have good access to a range of creative resources.

Children manipulate small objects competently as they join construction pieces together. They confidently use the climbing frame, and develop good throwing and catching skills using bats and balls. Children's knowledge and awareness of healthy eating is promoted because staff raise this in conversation at suitable times. Resources, such as pencils, sticky tape, scissors and paintbrushes are used competently and precisely by children, who also clearly understand that

some equipment must be used safely. Children move around safely and confidently indoors. They enjoy pedalling tricycles and scooters in the outdoor area. However, their spatial awareness is not fully developed as they often ride into each other. Children climb steps competently and jump and land on two feet.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The nursery is effective in meeting children's individual needs, so that their sense of belonging is strong. They receive a warm and personal welcome and are fully supported by caring interactions with staff. They are fully included as staff nurture and value their individuality. Staff ensure all children can take part in all activities according to their needs and abilities. Staff intuitively respond to children's non-verbal communications to support their play. Children have a good understanding of the daily routines and staff very successfully create a fully participative environment. Children learn about the local community as they take part in activities and outings. Activities are undertaken and a good range of resources are available reflecting other cultures and races. For example, a recent topic has been undertaken about Africa and different safari animals. Children also explore foods from around the world. This helps increase children's awareness of diversity and helps develop a positive attitude to others. Well planned visitors to the nursery stimulate children's knowledge of local issues and the people who help us in the community. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There is a key worker system in place and children's records contain clear information about their individual needs. The nursery has a special needs statement in place and the named coordinator accesses relevant training.

Behaviour is generally good throughout nursery. Children are beginning to respect rules of setting, such as sharing and being kind to each other. Adults are calm and positive with the children, creating a relaxed, happy environment where children's self-esteem is promoted. The children respond to requests to help to tidy up and have a growing awareness of the rules of the setting. They receive lots of praise for positive behaviour which helps to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Relationships with parents are friendly and relaxed, enhancing children's sense of security. Parents feel staff are approachable, very helpful and always willing to make time to discuss their child's progress. A daily feedback sheet gives them information about their child's care and learning. They are confident to raise any concerns and are clearly informed about the procedure if they have a complaint. Regular newsletters keep parents fully informed about nursery issues and their views are sought through regular questionnaires.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive detailed information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and what their child is doing and learning. Information is shared on a daily basis and at regular parents' evenings. Parents receive written information about new topics and are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. They frequently access their child's development file. Well considered use of photographs provide colourful insights for parents about the activities their child enjoys. Parents are very familiar with what their child is learning and how they are progressing.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's feelings of security and well-being are enhanced by the effective deployment of staff. Good staffing levels enable staff to spend time in direct work with children. The key

person system works successfully to ensure familiar and trusted adults are on hand to attend to children's individual needs. The nursery environment is well organised to promote children's welfare, learning and safety. Daily routines are clearly planned to support children's varying needs and interests. Space and resources are organised well to promote children's independent participation. Staff are knowledgeable about child development and make good use of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum to provide good quality care and education. Effective supervision and appraisal sessions are held to monitor staff performance, promote personal development and to recognise strengths within the team. The management team monitor the provision continuously to ensure standards are met and good quality care delivered.

Leadership and management is good. Staff are committed and hard working. They work together effectively as a cohesive team. Staff are well supported with regular opportunities to meet together, share views and attend further training. The senior management team have a 'hands on' approach and frequently work alongside staff in the nursery. This, together with regular appraisals, helps them to monitor the quality of teaching and identify training needs. Systematic observations of children help staff to identify children's interests and plan for their progress.

Comprehensive policies and procedures are effectively implemented, so that children's welfare is safeguarded and are continually reviewed to improve practice. Recruitment and vetting procedures are fully robust, ensuring that staff are suitably skilled and experienced to work with children. All the required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. However, Ofsted has not recently been kept up to date with the arrangements for the use of the tent for some activities for children. Parents' wishes regarding their child's care clearly influence day-to-day practice and clear written agreements are recorded.

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 the provider was asked to: ensure fresh drinking water is more accessible to all children; ensure some domestic style furniture is provided to assist children in developing mobility and to continue normal life experiences; review the organisation of the floor space and layout of the resources in the pre-school area, to enable children free flow throughout the sessions.

Fresh drinking water is now available for all children improving their overall health. Domestic style furniture including comfortable chairs is in place in the baby room to assist their mobility and physical development. The nursery has re organised the rooms and free flow play is evident in the pre-school room which contributes to children's overall development.

In regard to the provision for funded nursery education it was recommended the provider develop the assessment records to identify them with the stepping stones and clearly record when children have achieved them. Assessment records clearly identify children's progress and assist staff in planning the next steps for children's development. Staff make good use of the stepping stones within the curriculum ensuring all areas of learning are covered.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action in order to meet the National Standards. Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 1 : Suitable person, National Standard 13 : Child protection and National

Standard 14 : Documentation. The concerns were originally shared with another agency. Ofsted then interviewed the registered provider and actions were raised. Ofsted then visited the provision on 28 November 2006 and 4 January 2007 to ensure that the actions had been met. The actions have been satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- further develop hygiene procedures for hand washing in the pre-school room, and the disposal of nappies in the 'tweenie' room
- ensure Ofsted is informed each time the tent is used as an activity area.

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):

- further develop focussed activity sheets to clearly identify differentiation for children's individual learning needs
- improve opportunities for developing children's spatial awareness when playing outdoors.

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