

Haltwhistle Little Star

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY278887
Inspection date	18 July 2007
Inspector	Janet Fairhurst
Setting Address	Woodhead Lane, Haltwhistle, Northumberland, NE49 9DP
Telephone number	01434 322233
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Registered person	Haltwhistle Little-Star Pre-School Ltd
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 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?

Haltwhistle Little-Star Pre-School is run by a management committee. It has been registered since 2004 and operates from a purpose-built nursery in the centre of Haltwhistle. A maximum of 50 children may attend at any one time. It is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 until 18:00 all year. Externally, there is a fully enclosed outdoor garden with covered play area.

There are currently 115 children aged from birth to eight years on roll; of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

There are 13 members of staff employed to work with the children, who all hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are cared for in a warm, clean environment where they learn to manage their personal hygiene needs independently. The older children know how to wash their hands ready for snack and proudly demonstrate how to use the paper towels. Effective routines are in place with regard to nappy changing and staff follow clear procedures when caring for babies and toddlers, such as providing clean bedding each day. The daily routine allows for all children to have periods of rest and activity, which suits their individual needs. Children are well cared for in the event of illness or injury as staff are trained in first aid and follow effective procedures for accidents, illness and the administration of medication.

Children's growth and development is promoted through a range of balanced and nutritious meals and snacks, which includes a variety of fruit and vegetables. These are prepared fresh on a daily basis and cater effectively for all children's dietary requirements so that they feel included. Children's mealtimes are a social occasion where they have opportunities to converse with their peers and adults. Older children are able to have a drink when they are thirsty as a water dispenser is available within the playroom.

Children enjoy a range of physical activity, particularly outdoors where they are able to move freely and play with a selection of resources, such as wheeled toys and large play equipment, which aids their physical development, control and co-ordination. Babies and toddlers have their physical needs met well. They are able to move freely, practising crawling and newly emerging walking skills. There are opportunities for children to pull themselves up on furniture and to move around to aid their development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an environment which is very secure. Toys and equipment are in the main already set out for children however, some additional resources are made accessible to children. Appropriate risk assessments are conducted and practice is consistently evaluated to increase all children's safe participation in everyday activities. Accidents are routinely monitored. There is clear planning for safe evacuation in an emergency and records are maintained.

Staff supervise children well so as to create a balance which allows children to move freely within the setting, whilst ensuring their wellbeing is maintained. Children are beginning to understand how to keep themselves safe; they know and accept safety rules, for example, no running in the nursery and the reason why it is not acceptable to throw toys. Children's safety is further promoted through staff's awareness of the potential risks and the steps they take to minimise these. For example, during mealtimes, staff secure young children into their highchairs using harness, and the use of passwords for the collection of children.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded by staff who recognise their responsibility to protect children in their care. Staff are guided by a clear child protection policy which outlines the procedures to follow should they have concerns. Staff attend regular training in order to update their knowledge. Children are protected from the risk of harm as they are never left alone with people who have not been vetted or released to adults the nursery have no prior knowledge of.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy their time at the nursery. They know the routine well, enter the group confidently and leave parents easily. They are keen to participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. The close and caring relationships established increase children's sense of trust and help to develop a strong sense of self. Babies and toddlers play contentedly, learning to enjoy being with others. They have opportunity to explore treasure baskets with different materials, wooden and metal objects, which stimulate their senses and curiosity.

Effective systems are in place between parents and staff which ensures that children are cared for in line with their own routines. Children are developing early communication skills as staff warmly interact with them through play and everyday activities, such as nappy changing and feeding. Staff are using the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning activities for children aged under three years. This helps them to ensure that all areas of children's development are being considered. Staff are beginning to take observations and record children's achievements which are used to influence the programme of activities offered.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and produce planned activities to develop the learning areas. However, occasionally the learning objective planned is not achieved as adults overly direct activities and miss opportunities to use conversation and carefully framed open-ended questions to encourage children to think and consolidate their learning. Accommodation and resources generally promote children's learning. However, staff do not always give sufficient consideration to ensuring that a balanced range of resources is consistently accessible to children in order for them to fully develop their learning, creativity and ability to make choices. For example, in the writing area, children have only pencils to choose from and the home corner area is very bland and lacks interest.

The children are confident; they speak up during group discussions and are keen to ask questions. They work well in large groups and small groups, and are beginning to take turns and share. The children are well behaved and are aware of right and wrong. The children show initiative and have good personal independence skills. For example, they use the toilet alone, wash their hands after creative activities and collect their cutlery ready for lunchtime. The children begin to learn about print carrying meaning, for example, they find their name cards for self-registration. Although children are making good progress in mark making, some forming recognisable letters and others able to write their names, they are not encouraged to practise this in situations such as identifying their own creative work and in role play situations.

The children are beginning to use information technology to support their learning and they handle the computer mouse increasingly well. Children have opportunities to care for living things, such as their sunflowers and tomatoes. However, there are too few planned scientific and investigatory activities and resources offered to encourage children to explore, investigate and discover. Children practise counting, recognising and using numbers daily, through a range of activities appropriate to their level of development. Children are developing their understanding of pattern and shape as they complete a range of jig-saw puzzles and create models with magnetic blocks. Some children are able to recognise numbers to five and use their understanding to confidently work out 'more than' and 'less than'. The children use a variety of construction kits and are sometimes quite imaginative in their designs.

Children are confident and well co-ordinated; they have good awareness of space and others, as they ride bikes and cars in the garden. The children use a range of large and small resources, such as threading beads, puzzles, and large and small construction materials, to develop the fine manipulative skills. Sometimes the children engage in free painting or drawing, but more often this is overly adult-directed. For example, adults advise the children which colours to use and cut the shapes out for collage work. This does not value what children have to offer and encourage freedom of expression.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff take time to find out about the individual children who attend, such as what their likes and dislikes are. As a result, their needs are met whilst at the setting. Children learn about the local community through visits from the fire service and the local policeman. Children engage in suitable activities to promote an understanding of the wider world as they celebrate festivals, such as the Jewish festival of Hanukah. However, throughout the nursery multi-cultural resources are limited and not very evident in play situations. For example, there are no dressing up clothes, cooking utensils or dolls in the home corner. Staff demonstrate a good understanding and awareness of learning difficulties and disability issues. Arrangements are in place for children to have additional staff support to help them take part in everyday activities.

Children are well behaved. For example, they take turns, share, and show concern and acceptance of the needs of others. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour through effective management strategies and methods. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are generally well supported by staff as they are given lots of encouragement, support and praise which raises their self-esteem and self-worth.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are greeted at the beginning and end of the nursery session, where there is always time to talk to staff about how their children have enjoyed their day. Parents are offered good information about the setting in the form of a nursery booklet. This explains the setting, policies, hours, and gives parents across the age groups information on the care and educational provision. Additional information is also displayed in the entrance hall for parents. Plans are displayed for parents; this helps to keep parents informed of their child's learning and enables them to continue this learning in the home if they wish. An effective combination of informal and formal methods enables parents and staff to share information about children's achievements and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery is organised in a way that enables children to be grouped appropriately according to age. Each area has clear routines in place to support the day to day running of the nursery satisfactorily. Staff are deployed well, they work together as a team, and are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. The staff have a positive attitude towards training and development. The nursery managers encourage the staff to undertake training to extend their professionalism. New nursery staff are encouraged to shadow experienced staff when they start the nursery, as a way of learning about the nursery procedures.

The leadership and management for nursery education is satisfactory and generally supports the implementation of the Foundation Stage. Although there are some weakness in staff

knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, these do not impact on the care provided but do mean that children's opportunity for learning is not always maximised.

All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and wellbeing is in place and is regularly reviewed; however, a written policy which outlines the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against staff is not in place. 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 setting was asked to ensure all records of medication administered is retained in a secure manner, ensure the lunchtime routines meet the needs of all children and to draw up procedures to be followed in the event of child becoming lost. Medication records are maintained well and stored securely within the main office. All required details are collated and each entry is countersigned by the child's parent or carer. Lunchtime routines are a very well managed and social occasion enjoyed by all children. There is now a policy in place which clearly outlines the procedures to be followed in the event of a child becoming lost which is shared with parents and understood by all staff. The improvements made have a positive impact on children's overall safety and wellbeing.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standard 6, Safety and National Standard 7, Health. An Ofsted Early Years Childcare Inspector visited the provision on the 11 June 2007. An action was raised in relation to National Standard 7, recording of accidents and satisfactorily met by the registered provider, who remains qualified for registration.

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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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):

- devise a policy to reflect the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff
- ensure children have access to a range of resources that reflect positive images of culture, disability, gender and ethnicity (also applies to nursery education).

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):

- develop staff's knowledge, understanding and skills in the use of questioning to improve the quality of teaching and children's learning
- improve the presentation and extend the range of resources: to encourage children to make independent choices, to explore and investigate how things work and develop their ability to express themselves imaginatively and creatively (also applies to care).

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