

Crocus Early Years (Hinxton Hall Nursery)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY136664
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Inspector	Sandra Daniels
Setting Address	Wellcome Genome Campus, Hinxton, Cambs, CB10 1RQ
Telephone number	01223 495025
E-mail	
Registered person	Bright Horizon Family Solutions 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 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?

The Crocus Early Years Centre opened in 2001. It is part of a large chain of day care facilities owned by Bright Horizons. The nursery operates from a purpose built unit situated in the grounds of the Genome Campus on the outskirts of Cambridge. There are five group rooms for children of different ages. The unit also has kitchens, staff room, office, laundry and toilet areas. There is a fully enclosed all weather play area available for outside play.

There are currently 120 children from three months to four years on roll. This includes funded three- and four-year-old children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with English as an additional language and would make provision to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting is open from 08.00 - 18.00 hours five days a week all year round excluding Christmas through New year.

The group currently employ 27 permanent members of staff and two on bank contracts, all of whom hold, or are working towards, childcare qualifications from NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) level two to NVQ level six. Two members of staff are currently working towards

NVQ level seven qualifications and the manager holds the EYPS (Early Years Professional Status) qualification. The setting receives support from qualified teachers on site and the Early Years Development Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is well promoted in this setting. Staff follow well-planned routines for ensuring areas used by the children are kept very clean. Outdoor shoes are not worn in the baby room, contributing to babies' health and safety. Children are protected from cross-infection because staff take care to follow procedures such as wearing gloves and aprons when changing nappies. Children are learning about how to maintain good hygiene for themselves because routines for hand washing are well established. Topics and themes led by the staff also promote healthy lifestyles effectively. Children enjoy topical books such as 'Why must I eat healthy food?' or 'Why must I take exercise?', further reinforcing their understanding of the benefits of healthy living. Staff maintain good records for accidents and administering medication which helps to ensure that children's health needs are met particularly in an emergency.

Children enjoy freshly prepared meals and snacks each day. Menus are planned to ensure that children are well nourished. Children enjoy a variety of fruits and salad items at snack times and readily eat vegetables because food is served imaginatively and attractively. Regular drinks are also offered to babies and younger children, whilst older ones help themselves when they are thirsty so that they remain hydrated. Babies receive food which is an appropriate texture for their individual stage of development. However, younger babies, who are not yet ready for finger foods, are currently given the same foods for tea as they had for lunch. Babies and younger children are encouraged to learn to feed themselves and often have great fun doing so.

Children participate in and enjoy a variety of opportunities to be active. Children love to get out in the fresh air at least daily. They can explore nature around them as they go for walks around the campus grounds. They watch the fish and the geese on the lake and explore the log pile. Children run, learn to balance and develop large body skills well because the outside area has sufficient space for climbing frames, sit-and-ride toys and push along toys for the younger ones. Staff plan activities which promote children's physical development and skills effectively. Arrangements for children to rest and sleep are also good. Young babies sleep comfortably according to their needs and the wishes of their parents. Older children are also able to sleep peacefully and safely on their own beds with clean bedding.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is a priority in this setting. They are well protected from harm and neglect because the staff are vigilant and ensure safety precautions are well maintained. Good procedures are in place for keeping risk assessments up-to-date and relevant to the setting. Fire evacuation procedures and drills are also well documented. This means that potential hazards to children are carefully minimised and ensures that children are kept safe whilst playing. Safety precautions such as plug socket covers and covered radiators ensure that children can move around the building safely. Rooms and resources are also checked regularly by the staff and any unsafe objects are removed to further protect children from accidents.

Children benefit from the wide range of well-chosen toys and equipment available throughout the setting. Toys are purchased with children's needs and safety in mind. They are able to eat, sit and play safely because tables and chairs are appropriate for their stage of development. For example, babies use bouncer chairs, low wooden chairs with trays or low wooden chairs which fit snugly into the tables. Children are well protected from unwanted visitors because all external exits are locked and well monitored by staff and managers. The security of the premises is second to none. As the nursery is on a campus, photographic identification is required to enter the site.

All members of staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding children. They recognise common signs of abuse such as unexplained injuries and changes to children's behaviour and can clearly explain the procedures for recording and reporting any concerns. Written policies and procedures are clear in this area and support staff effectively in managing any concerns they may have for a child's welfare and safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy and settled. They have great fun, look forward to attending and their confidence grows as they become familiar with the routine. Children develop an excellent attitude towards learning as they purposefully engage in a broad range of interesting and challenging activities throughout the day. Children play a dynamic part in the setting. They are animated and enthusiastic as they make choices about their activities and care. Practitioners are highly skilled and use their exceptional understanding of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage, to provide high quality care and education.

Children benefit from sensitive interactions from staff to promote their care and development. Very warm caring relationships enable children to feel safe and secure. Their care is significantly enhanced by very effective organisation. Knowledgeable staff successfully provide innovative experiences to ensure children enjoy what is on offer in the setting. They work diligently to ensure children reach their full potential through very enjoyable play opportunities. Space and resources are organised successfully and spontaneous and inspired activities provide young children with interesting and exciting experiences to broaden their overall development. Children are stimulated and play effectively independently and with others. Younger children make excellent progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Communication skills are extremely well supported through high quality adult-child interactions. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences. For example, babies playing with ice cubes enjoy the feel and texture as the ice melts and turns to water.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Staff create a highly stimulating and welcoming environment for children. They have a first rate understanding of the Foundation Stage, are very confident in their delivery of the curriculum and knowledgeable about the aims and learning objectives. The planning tool is exceptional in detailing the intended learning objectives linked to all six areas of learning and includes the role of the adult, evaluation of the activities and differentiation for more and less able children. All aspects of children's learning are planned for and planning is largely guided by children's personal interests and favourite things.

Staff rigorously monitor children's achievements during their time at the setting. They constantly make a variety of meaningful observations, gain parents' views about what their child can do and use photographs to complete the child's progress record. Staff use this information skilfully to inform and plan the next stages in children's learning. Children benefit from staff's involvement and interest in their play; they ask open ended questions and extend their imaginary play by converting the role play area into a recycling centre. Children bring things in to place in the appropriate recycling bin. Staff speak respectfully to children on their level; they genuinely listen and are interested in what children have to say. Children's behaviour is managed consistently by staff using suitable strategies. Children listen attentively at small and large group times and actively respond to staff instructions, for example, to tidy away the toys.

Children are highly motivated to learn as they follow the example set by staff who are enthusiastic and interested. Children develop an awareness of their own needs and become sensitive to the needs of others as they allow their peers to join in their play. Children have opportunities to make choices and decisions about their care and play. They can select and use activities and resources independently and use their own initiative. Children initiate interactions with each other and form very good relationships. Children develop a love of books as they see them displayed attractively and can access them freely at any time. They can often be seen looking at books alone or taking them to a member of staff to share. Children learn that books can be a source of information as they find pictures showing different weather conditions for the current theme. Practitioners competently introduce new vocabulary to children, for example, evaporation, condensation, precipitation and collection as they discuss the rain cycle. Children have daily opportunities to see their names in print as they find their place at the dinner table. They learn to write for different purposes, for example, making shopping lists and taking telephone messages in role play.

Children make excellent progress in developing control and coordination. They confidently and competently use small equipment such as scissors, cutters and pencils with increasing accuracy. They use large equipment such as bikes to develop strength and stamina. Children thoroughly enjoy extensive opportunities to learn about the natural world through planned activities such as observing seasonal changes in the weather and exploring the log pile in the grounds. They use magnets with increasing confidence, discovering that they can both attract and repel other metal objects. They use the computer with increasing ability and control, gaining an understanding of technology. Children create freely, enjoying an outstanding variety of art and craft activities and messy play. They explore, experiment and discover the changes that happen to sand when water is added. Children use their imaginations in role play and enjoy singing and using musical instruments. All children successfully develop their skills through well-planned and spontaneous activities and experiences which meet their individual learning needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are able to join in and make a positive contribution in this setting because staff are committed to getting to know them as individuals through their effective key worker system. Staff are knowledgeable about promoting equality of opportunity through daily activities in the setting. They use resources such as books, posters and small world figures to teach children about diversity and differences. Children are learning to develop a respect for themselves and others because celebrating festivals and finding out about other cultures and beliefs is important to the nursery. Children who may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported in the setting. There is a dedicated member of staff who acts as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator for the nursery and staff are ably supported in managing record keeping, liaising

with parents and other professionals, as well as adapting activities so that all children are included in the life of the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work hard to develop good relationships with parents. Children receive care which is tailored to their needs because staff gather and keep good, relevant information from parents such as sleep routines, dietary information and their likes and dislikes. Parents also receive information from staff regarding children's daily care. They also benefit from access to a childcare consultant. She works with both parents and staff to offer advice and resolve any difficulties and concerns parents may have about their children.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and contributes significantly to children's well-being in the nursery. Parents' views about their child's needs and interests are actively sought at the beginning of, and throughout their time in the school. Parents are fully informed about the Foundation Stage and the progress their child is making. There are highly effective two-way channels of communication and a sharing of knowledge and expertise about, for example, cultural festivals. Parents and staff work well together to support children's learning, both in the setting and at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. Children's welfare and safety is effectively maintained because robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure they are cared for by suitable staff. A comprehensive induction ensures all staff clearly understand and can implement the nursery policies, procedures and high standards of care. Therefore children's well-being and care are enhanced. Children receive good care from qualified staff who are encouraged to undertake a range of training and are expected to complete the nursery's core training programme. This means they complete training in first aid, food hygiene, child protection and equal opportunities. Consequently, they continue to develop their professional development which enhances the service provided. Ongoing effective appraisal systems are in place to highlight the staff's key strengths and training requirements. This time is also used to update information about the staff and to check their continued suitability to work with children.

The operational plan works very well in practice. Comprehensive policies and procedures are successfully implemented and staff are deployed effectively to ensure children receive consistent, high quality care and support in their learning and play. The environment is well organised to provide good play and learning opportunities. Therefore, children feel safe and secure and are happy to be there. The management are proactive in ensuring the service provided meets the needs of the children and families. This is made possible through an effective self-appraisal system, the nursery sets clear action plans with timescales and how these will be achieved. This shows the management are committed to enhancing the outcomes for the children in their care.

Staff are effective in ensuring children have time and space to participate in well-planned activities and experiences and time to develop their independent play and explore the environment. For younger children staff plan and implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework exceptionally well. All staff work well as a team, are good role models for behaviour and are dedicated to enhancing children's care and development. Consequently, all children's developmental progress is good.

Leadership and management is good. The setting is clearly led and managed for the benefit of the children. Management has clear aims for improving the quality of care and education for children and developmental plans are in place to address any issues. Staff attend a very broad spectrum of training that is identified to further develop their knowledge and understanding and so increase the progress children are making towards the early learning goals. All children are supported well to achieve their potential by staff working with parents and carers to support this progress. Management provides an induction for students and new staff which covers necessary information, policies and procedures. The manager is proactive in her approach and encourages all staff to play a full role in the setting. They hold regular staff meetings and reflect on their practice so that they are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. They evaluate the activities provided for the children and keep evidence to show how children make progress in their learning. The manager is always open to suggestions to improve the provision, and has agreed to further develop systems to ensure the whole staff team have a full working knowledge and understanding of practice throughout the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to make the outside play area more freely accessible to the children throughout the year. Children benefit from regular use of the outside play area which can be accessed from each group room. This area is covered and has a safety floor surface meaning it can be used in all weathers.

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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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 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):

- continue to develop menus, specifically for babies, to ensure they have a balanced variety of meals during the day

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 further systems to ensure that the whole staff team have a full working knowledge and understanding of practice throughout the nursery.

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