

# HCA Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 402293

**Inspection date** 09 October 2007

**Inspector** Janette Elaina Lockwood

**Setting Address** Hullbridge Community Association, Pooles Lane, Hullbridge, Hockley, Essex, SS5 6PA

**Telephone number** 01702 232987

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**Registered person** The Trustees of Hullbridge Community Association

**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](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?**

HCA Pre-School opened in 1971 and operates from two rooms in a community centre in Hullbridge. A maximum of 38 children from two to under five years may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open five days a week from 09:15 until 15:30 with the exception of Thursday afternoon.

There are currently 86 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 38 children receive funding for early education. The setting currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a small number of children who have English as an additional language.

The setting employs 13 members of staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have their health needs met because staff are aware of medical conditions, allergies and intolerances and have undertaken training in allergen avoidance and asthma awareness. Most of the premises is clean, however, in the book corner, the lowest shelf is very dusty and there is dust to the side and underneath the mats. As a consequence, there may be allergens present potentially affecting children with allergies such as asthma.

One member of staff has an up-to-date first aid certificate and a staff member who is a qualified nurse provides first aid cover if this member of staff is off sick. However, she does not hold a current first aid certificate to ensure at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate is on the premises or on outings at any one time. The remainder of the staff have undertaken first aid training in the past and keep accident and medication records properly but they may not have the up-to-date skills required when dealing with accidents and emergencies.

Children are well-nourished with plenty of healthy and appetising food such as fresh fruits and vegetables. They are learning the importance of a healthy diet through discussions with staff and the local greengrocer who brings the foods in. Staff offer the children drinks at snack time and children can ask for drinks to ensure they are not thirsty. Children attending the lunch club generally have healthy lunches as staff advise parents about their healthy eating policy and what to provide in their children's lunchboxes. This ensures children understand the importance of healthy eating in the setting.

Staff plan for children's physical development to ensure that children receive a range of physical activities each day. For example, children usually spend purposeful time in the garden at each session where they learn ball skills, play ring games or ride on bikes to help with their balance and co-ordination. When it is not possible to go out in the fresh air, children take part in well-organised music and movement sessions using their imagination and controlling their movements by following instructions.

The setting has links with a well known local football club who visit the children regularly to teach them ball skills and help them enjoy the fresh air and exercise. Younger children are beginning to develop their hand-eye co-ordination through using a range of small world equipment or using tools such as spoons to stir cake ingredients.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The setting operates from two rooms in a community centre, one of which is for sole use of the group so it is decorated brightly with children's work. The other room displays children's work on low screens so children can see the pictures easily. Both rooms are well-organised so children can play in safety and comfort. Children can choose from a wide range of play equipment, some of which is stored at their level and there are procedures followed for cleaning the equipment, for example, the chairs are steam cleaned regularly.

Staff talk to children about how to be safe, for example, when putting equipment away or when they line up to go outside. They have visits from the local police and fire safety officers to help them to understand how to be safe in their community and how these people can help them.

The doors to the two play rooms are kept secure so that children cannot go out alone and visitors cannot gain access. In addition, there are appropriate safety precautions taken to ensure children are kept safe when using the toilets as staff always accompany them.

There are policies relating to child protection and accompanying information about procedures to follow if allegations are made against staff. However, the information is unclear and the new local safeguarding children policy has not yet been adopted by the group. Some staff have undertaken training to help safeguard children and are aware of their responsibilities. There is a folder of information which contains the procedures from the Local Safeguarding Children Board and a flow chart is displayed to support staff members to act appropriately should they have a concern. The setting does not currently have a consistent procedure for recording existing injuries to children so repeated patterns of injuries may not be recognised as a concern.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

During the morning sessions, children aged between two and three years are cared for together in a room which is laid out with age appropriate activities to help them develop according to their needs. They enjoy a variety of activities which interest them. For example, they increase their confidence in choosing materials to make collage with glue, or snuggle up to staff to read impromptu stories, demonstrating their ability to trust others. Staff support the children well in their play, interacting effectively and encouraging them to become skilful communicators.

In the afternoons, younger children join with the children aged three to five years and follow their routines and planning. Documentation does not yet show how the activities relate to all children's levels of attainment and potentially there may be a miss-match for the younger children. However, some staff have attended 'Birth to three matters' framework training and there is information about the framework displayed to guide staff in supporting younger children's play and learning and staff record observations of what children can do. Planning does not yet use the recommended framework and records of children's progress are not linked to a developmental guide. As a result, the information on children's individual stages of progress does not fully inform staff of what they can do next to help children's growth, learning and development.

When children first start attending the group, observations are made to see if the children bond with a particular staff member. Where possible, that person is then allocated to be the child's key worker and form links with the child's parents and record observations. Children are therefore supported and their choices acknowledged.

### **EARLY EDUCATION**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and are familiar with the stepping stones and the early learning goals. They plan purposeful activities for children to learn through practical and immediate experiences. Staff plan the curriculum to promote children's progress towards the early learning goals and show what the children are intended to learn. Some details on the written plans are not clear, for example, the grouping of children or the resources to be used. Children are better supported when staff have clear guidance about the preparation of activities. Staff are aware that some children learn at different rates and have a range of different learning needs. With this in mind, they provide some challenges for more-able children and can adapt activities for children who may struggle with the initial concept.

Staff help motivate the children and use ideas that keep their interest, for example, story times include the use of a story board and stick on pictures that children can add at key times during the story. Alternatively, staff use puppets and large books so that all the children can see what is going on. Staff use their experience to make these group times interesting and exciting for children which helps them concentrate and understand the messages being relayed.

Children are interested in their play opportunities, particularly gathering where staff are situated so they can chat with them and draw on their support. Children confidently choose their activities, demonstrate both co-operative and solitary play and some strong friendships are developing. Children follow a set routine with any variations explained to them so they develop their trust and sense of belonging.

Children are building their skills in language for communication through using familiar words, simple statements and questions with both staff and their peers. They listen to stories with increasing attention and ask questions to find out the information they need to know. During children's play it is clear to see how they use their language for thinking as they talk through what they are doing, for example, naming the items they put on the table in the role play area. They use talk in imaginary situations such as when using telephones. Children have opportunities to link sounds and letters, confidently recognising their name cards and saying the names or sounds of some of the letters. The environment is text rich with many labels and information around the room to help children recognise that text has meaning. They confidently choose books themselves and concentrate at story time, sometimes predicting what may happen next. There are frequent opportunities for children to ascribe meanings to marks and they are encouraged to use writing tools in their role play, for example, taking down pretend telephone messages.

Children confidently join in with number rhymes and songs which help with their understanding of simple calculation, for example, adding one more. They sit with staff on a one to one basis to learn to recognise numerals and to show how to represent numbers using fingers, marks on a paper, pictures or items. Children count the months of the year up to ten on their fingers and staff use their fingers to 'add' two more so children can continue counting up to twelve. In addition, some more-able children can say with confidence the number that is one more or one less than a given number.

Children show an interest in shape and space using construction toys to build models or by using collage materials to cut pieces to fit their pictures. In addition, they use size and positional language during their play to show they are beginning to grasp new concepts. Children use sand to experiment and explore capacity, filling up buckets and containers with different amounts and staff help them use these concepts during cooking to establish the correct amount of ingredients.

Children use their curiosity to explore and investigate, showing an interest in why things happen and how things work, for example, rolling discs along the floor to see how far they can go. They use the construction sets to join together to build and balance and sometimes construct with a purpose in mind. Staff provide a variety of equipment which helps children show an interest in technology such as many different types of camera, binoculars and magnifying glasses. In circle time each day children talk about the day of the week and the month of the year and they talk about significant things that have happened to them to help them gain a sense of time. Sometimes children go for a walk along the river to begin to show an interest in their immediate environment and observe and identify features about the place they live and the natural world.

Staff plan regular activities to help the children develop their physical skills in relation to the stepping stones so they begin to move and control their bodies. There are activities to help show respect for other children's personal space and to collaborate with each other in shared tasks such as carrying equipment to put away. Children are confidently using skill and control with mark making implements such as pencils and enjoy exploring malleable materials by poking, squeezing and twisting. In addition, they enjoy using tools to effect changes, for example cutting or rolling the play dough.

Children use a texture board to describe different textures and use their senses to find out about new things, for example, different types of food. There are daily opportunities for children to make constructions, collages, paintings or drawings so they begin to use some of their own ideas. Using interesting musical instruments, children learn to differentiate sounds and can play loudly or softly using the instruments to create a rhythm to sing to. A range of props for role play encourages them to act out real or imagined experiences with themselves and one another.

Staff record observations on children during their activities and use the stepping stones when recording their progress. The progress records show what individual children can do and what they need to do next to move on. Staff use this information to plan the curriculum so that it meets all the children's learning needs helping them progress towards the early learning goals.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They show care and concern for their friends, asking where they are or seeking them to play with and learn how they can help children less fortunate than themselves. For example, collecting items to send to developing countries at Christmas for the 'Shoebox Challenge'.

Children learn to appreciate some aspects of multicultural festivals such as the Chinese New Year, for example, by making a large dragon and learning a dragon dance. This helps them begin to understand some of our similarities and differences in the ways in which we live and in addition staff read stories about how children in other cultures live so they can begin to value diversity. There are some books and resources which show people from other cultures and with different beliefs but resources relating to people with disabilities are not always readily available to help children gain an understanding of the challenges they face or their value in our society.

Several staff have received relevant training for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are policies in place to support children who need extra help. The setting welcomes meetings with other professionals and liaises with them on particular children to help them achieve their goals. There are some visual strategies in place in the setting which includes a visual timetable and staff are trained to use Makaton signs to help children with communication difficulties.

Staff talk to children about following simple rules and most children understand their importance. Children behave well and staff sometimes intervene to address a dispute and help children to take turns. Staff use only positive methods to address any unwanted behaviour and once children are settled in they generally begin to understand the routines and how to behave with others.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The setting provides parents of children receiving nursery education information about the themes they will cover and the planning is displayed for them to see. A display just inside the door shows information about the Foundation Stage and how children learn and this is supported with photographs of activities, helping parents to understand about what their children are learning. There are opportunities for parents to see their child's progress records, for example, by being invited in to speak to their key person and parents are able to ask to see records at any time. Staff write a leaving report for children which explains what they have learned during their time in the setting.

All parents receive a newsletter which reiterates important information and dates and details forthcoming themes for the term. Any issues arising are added to the notice board so parents are made aware. There is a prospectus detailing relevant information and the policies and procedures are available. Parents and staff are informed about the setting's practices. There is an up-to-date complaints procedure which shows parents how the setting manages complaints in a timely manner.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The supervisor organises regular curriculum planning meetings and oversees the effective delivery of the Foundation Stage although planning is not consistently clear. Relevant training and initiatives are sought to further increase the staff's skills in teaching and to help them bring in new ideas to help children learn. For example, the setting is taking part in the Communication Language and Literacy Development project with other early years' providers in the area.

The supervisor is open to new ideas and motivates the staff to provide a sound learning environment for children and to contribute their ideas for activities to children to help them progress towards the early learning goals.

There are written procedures in place for the vetting of staff which describes the recruitment policy and how staff are checked to ensure they are suitable to work with children. The supervisor also uses a staffing manual to check she is using up-to-date procedures for staffing and employment. There is a system of appraisals for staff.

The setting meets the conditions of registration and have a high staff ratio which benefits children as they can spend quality time with adults. The staff work well together as a team and understand their roles and responsibilities to ensure that the sessions are organised and calm to children can enjoy and achieve. The organisation of time, space and resources is satisfactory. Overall children's needs are met.

Most records, policies and procedures are consistent with the requirements of the National Standards to help the setting run smoothly and to ensure children are cared for properly.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the setting was required to improve the arrangements for children to wash their hands. Children now use a mousse type hand wash to help prevent the spread of infection.

At the last inspection the setting was required to improve the challenges set for more-able children staff now think about how they can challenge them. For example, children are

encouraged to pour their own drinks or to help put equipment away. In addition staff know what most children are capable of so give them new things to do such as counting that little bit further.

### **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**

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 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 the premises is kept thoroughly clean in all areas
- ensure there is at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate on the premises or on outings at any one time
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and that existing injuries are consistently recorded
- Develop planning and record keeping helping staff monitor younger children's individual stages of progress and support them in linking activities to children's learning and development
- improve the provision of resources and the activities which reflect diversity, particularly with regard to disability.

### **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):

- improve information for staff when planning activities for three and four year olds receiving funding so that plans clearly show how activities will be organised and carried out.

**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)**