

Old School House Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Unique Reference Number | 251779 |
| Inspection date | 03 October 2007 |
| Inspector | Karen Pretty |
| Setting Address | The Old School House, School Road, Helmingham, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 6EX |
| Telephone number | 01473 890 950 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | The Trustees of The Old School House 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Old School House Nursery opened at their present venue in 1996. They operate from four rooms in a converted Victorian school house, adjacent to Helmingham Primary School. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open for five days a week from 09:15 until 15:00 during term time only. The children are offered cooked lunches provided from the school which are served in the nursery. A hard-surfaced area and an enclosed garden are available for outside play.

There are currently 42 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 30 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves the immediate and surrounding local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 11 members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and four members of staff are working towards a qualification, four other members of staff are attending further qualifications at level four or above. In addition, they have a

French and dance teacher who each work one session a week. The nursery receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is greatly enhanced as they are cared for by staff who are vigilant in implementing robust health and personal hygiene procedures. Children fully understand the need to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and playing outside. Photographs of hand washing are displayed as visual prompts in the toilets and low-level facilities are provided, enabling older children to manage their hand washing routines completely independently. Paper towels and liquid soap are provided to effectively minimise the risk of cross-infection. The bathroom has been creatively decorated with colourful wall murals based on familiar characters to further encourage the children to use the facilities. Children can rest and sleep very comfortably and according to their needs on comfortable cushions and bean bags with clean bedding. Children's health is further enhanced by highly hygienic procedures for nappy changing, for example, stringent daily cleaning routines ensure designated areas for nappy changing are spotlessly clean and staff consistently wear gloves and wash their hands.

Excellent procedures are in place to ensure children receive effective care should they have an accident or become unwell. A highly informative written policy including full details of communicable diseases ensures staff and parents are fully aware of when it is appropriate for children to attend and when they should be kept at home. Staff frequently check the contents of the first aid kit, which is easily accessible throughout the session and all of the staff complete training in first aid for babies and young children. Detailed records of accidents and any medication administered are signed consistently by parents, ensuring children's health is not compromised. Children are well protected as staff only administer medication if they have all the information and training to do so safely.

Children experience a rich array of activities which enable them to develop an excellent awareness of the benefits of a healthy diet and lifestyle. For example, they develop an understanding of where vegetables come from when planting and caring for their own tomatoes in the garden. Children enjoy a balanced selection of nutritious snacks such as apples, breadsticks, bananas and raisins. Meal times are very social times as the children and staff sit at the tables together and enjoy freshly prepared hot meals from the next door school kitchen, including baked bean lasagne and tuna pasta bake, these dishes are always offered with a potato option, vegetables, salad and coleslaw. Children's individual dietary needs are effectively met as the staff proactively request and record information about their likes, dislikes and any allergies when they first join the setting. Children's health is promoted further as the staff follow excellent procedures when handling food, for example, staff routinely record the temperature of the refrigerator to ensure food is stored safely and separate areas are designated for preparing food. All children remain very well hydrated as they frequently help themselves to drinks from the water dispenser which is easy to access and several posters are placed in other areas of the setting to remind children during their play.

Children relish being active whilst outdoors in the fresh air. They enjoy access to the secure and highly inviting play area on a daily basis, where they choose from a varied and stimulating range of equipment. As a result, children's physical development is promoted exceptionally well. For example, they negotiate space when riding tractors, roll and chase hoops down the

slope, balance skilfully on stilts and practise their climbing skills on the climbing apparatus. Children enjoy maximising the ample space available by running around freely and safely.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in an exceptionally well-organised premises which accommodates children comfortably and enhances their care, learning and play. An extremely welcoming environment is created by the immense amount of colourful displays which are meaningful to the children and displayed at their level. Children can choose to play in any of four playrooms which all provide ample space for them to move around freely and are organised successfully to create defined areas for activities. For example, generous floor space is available for children to spread out when engaged in small world play and comfortable cushions and seating provide inviting areas for relaxing and reading books. The well-designed entrance and office area is used exceptionally well. For example, the office is used for speaking to parents confidentially and there is an abundance of information displayed on a central notice board in the entrance.

Children are absorbed when playing with an extensive range of high quality toys and resources. The resources are fun, stimulating and provide excellent levels of challenge as children are eager to play with what is available. The staff are efficient in ensuring that resources are rotated regularly to reflect children's changing interests and all resources are checked vigilantly by staff to ensure they are safe for children to use. Careful consideration is given to how resources are stored in each of the playrooms, ensuring children are able to self-select activities with ease. For example, children confidently choose resources from plastic boxes which are labelled with a photograph of the contents.

Children's safety is given unquestionable priority as staff are dedicated to taking positive steps to minimise hazards during stringent daily risk assessments. Children are protected by the thorough security procedures in place. For example, visitors are vigilantly monitored and asked to sign the visitors book and the main door is locked to prevent unauthorised access to the premises. Children are protected further as comprehensive fire safety precautions are in place such as a clearly displayed fire escape procedure and routine testing of smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. Strict procedures are in place to ensure children are only collected by those who are authorised to do so. Children are developing a meaningful understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they practise the fire escape procedure on a regular basis and have regular visits from the police and fire brigade.

Children are skilfully protected from harm as all staff complete in-house training in child protection as part of their induction. As a result, they demonstrate extensive knowledge of issues relating to safeguarding children. A comprehensive written policy is fully implemented to ensure any concerns are prioritised and dealt with effectively. Children's safety is promoted further as a member of staff has specific responsibility for ensuring procedures continue to reflect current guidance and that all staff are fully aware of any changes.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children become engrossed in a wide range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities which provide high levels of challenge, appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children are eager and enthusiastic as they freely select from the extensive range of high quality toys and resources provided by staff, based on their expert

knowledge of child development. 'Birth to three matters' is reflected in the groups outstanding practice and they have introduced the framework into their planning and assessment for children under the age of three. Staff use their observations of children aged under three to help them settle and to encourage peer and adult relationships.

Staff are extremely skilful and sensitive in helping all children settle and become happy so they enjoy their time in the vibrant and stimulating setting. All children make positive relationships with staff and their peers and are genuinely pleased to see each other and share their news and ideas. Children's self-esteem is successfully promoted as staff highly value their contributions and praise their achievements. Group activities are carefully planned to ensure children of all ages and stages of development are able to participate at their own level, so helping them to develop a considerable sense of self worth.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Excellent use of accommodation provides a rich learning environment where children are fully engrossed in purposeful activities of their choice. Staff provide many opportunities for interesting well-planned activities derived from extremely well thought out plans, using their excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Planning incorporates a successful balance of all areas of learning and provides a versatile mix of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities. Learning intentions linked to stepping stones are clearly outlined in daily activity plans. These are carefully monitored by staff who use their comprehensive knowledge of children's learning to make informed observations which inform future plans. This ensures that starting points can be identified and children make rapid progress towards the early learning goals. Records are built on written observations which staff regularly evaluate and share with parents in order to make assessments. Staff support children extremely well during stimulating activities providing challenge with open-ended questions and extending children's learning. The session has a fast and lively pace yet children have time to become engrossed and complete chosen tasks. Quick thinking staff sensitively maximise on children's interest to develop their learning potential. Varied and challenging activities are planned to capture children's interest and meet different learning styles. Ongoing training enables staff to be innovative and creative as they plan around the children's interests. They manage children skilfully and sensitively giving good explanations and using praise. Children's behaviour is exemplary throughout and provides an optimum learning environment in which children make extremely good progress.

Children are motivated to learn through many well-planned opportunities which capture their interest. They are warmly welcomed into the colourful and stimulating environment by warm and caring staff who they are clearly delighted to see. Named cubby holes and coat pegs give children a good sense of belonging and encourage them to feel at home. Children's behaviour is excellent as they work as part of a group sharing equipment fairly. They relish the exciting activities and are extremely enthusiastic to have a go as they measure and weigh their dolls in the role play baby clinic. Despite the enthusiasm, they self-regulate their own behaviour extremely well as staff sensitively and skilfully oversee the activity. Children are very settled in their known routine and confidently offer ideas during a group time. Staff positively encourage children to manage developmentally appropriate tasks for themselves. Children manage coats, aprons and shoes with skill and confidence ensuring that they have the necessary skills required for starting school. An excellent range of cultural festivals and traditional days are planned for and children are encouraged to respect the views and beliefs of others. Children's achievements are valued and celebrated by staff who display their efforts giving children a sense of pride.

Children's language development is exceptionally good. They take turns to speak and listen as they sit in a group and are registered. Children enjoy using the small and cosy book corner that is extremely well resourced with books and props which enhance the stories. Staff skilfully support children and help them consolidate their learning by linking letters and sounds to stories and many other aspects of the session. Children are making excellent progress in their early writing skills. A name bank gives them a starting point and staff praise and encourage children very well as they persevere with writing their names. The room has many labels and prompts, encouraging children to know that text has a meaning. A colourful and extremely well-resourced writing area gives children ideas and exciting materials which children use to develop their writing skills. Creative and appealing ideas such as individual diaries gives excellent incentives for children to further practise their early writing.

Children are making excellent progress in their mathematical development. Appealing resources are laid out attractively to develop children's counting skills. Children count coloured blocks as they tidy them away, this is supported well by staff who encourage children to count on and use mathematical language. Children learn simple addition as they add groups together. Small world play enables staff to extend children's learning as they play with cars in the garage. They use positional and size language to describe the whereabouts of the car. They go on to talk about their homes and cars using more mathematical language. Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through an exciting range of hands-on experiences. A superb range of messy play enables children to experience different textures and states. They explore cornflour, shaving foam, wood chips, sand and water. Children are engaged in purposeful activities outside in the fresh air where their curiosity and interest is enhanced, for example, using paintbrushes and buckets of water to mark-make on the walls and fence. Planting allows children to observe growing things. Children enthusiastically develop many skills as they make the most of these activities. They are engrossed and focused as they experiment and learn through these rich and well-planned opportunities. Children observe living things from planned trips and visitors. An incubator with eggs gives them first-hand experience of hatching chicks. Children are dedicated to maximising and developing their own curiosity, one child cleverly spotted a field mouse in the garden and quickly gathered all the other children and staff to observe it closer, all children were eager and staff were forward thinking to cease this as a learning opportunity before the mouse was scooped up into a flowerpot and taken to the safety of the nearby hedgerow.

There are many opportunities for children's creative play through well-planned resources that are appealing and tactile. Bright paper laid out with a wide range of circle shaped materials for printing supports children's creativity well. Children and staff engage extremely well in imaginary play where they have time to become engrossed in their game. They co-operate well and staff support the game by allowing space and time to develop their imaginary ideas and act out their roles. A wide range of musical instruments enables children to explore different sounds. Children's dexterity is promoted extremely well through the wide range of activities that require hand to eye coordination. They assemble craft, puzzles and small blocks in a precise and meaningful way. Children roll and manipulate dough and clay into specific shapes.

Overall, children make outstanding progress in their learning and have excellent levels of achievement given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children develop an excellent sense of belonging in the setting. Children and families are warmly welcomed into the nursery by caring and friendly staff. Staff are extremely proactive in gaining information about children's backgrounds in order to best meet their individual needs. All children are included as intuitive staff tailor specific support to promote a fully inclusive environment. Children are able to make choices about how to spend their time. A softly furnished quiet area enables children to enjoy tranquil moments. Different sized groups encourage children to socialise and build positive relationships with each other. Children are given specific jobs that they are responsible for and delight in reminding each other of their responsibilities as they show care for each other and the environment. Children learn about a wide range of other cultures and beliefs through a broad range of exciting activities that are very well planned. Many positive images displayed around the room encourage children to learn about their similarities and differences. Children confidently learn new words in French as a teacher comes to the nursery for one session each week, this is further supported extremely well by staff who have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of different customs and cultures. Consequently the nursery acknowledges and celebrates diversity very well and provides a rich environment where many different cultures and customs are reflected. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The setting has an extremely positive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A trained and experienced designated staff member is responsible for supporting individual children. Staff proactively access training to support individual children's specific needs. The setting has an excellent and inclusive approach to caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Comprehensive written records for children are documented clearly and concisely, these are always shared and discussed with parents to ensure their views are included. Staff have an excellent understanding of how to best support children working closely with parents and utilising support from other professionals in order to meet the needs of each child.

Clear concise policies underpin practice and provide specific guidelines to behavioural expectations. Children's behaviour is extremely good. Staff who have attended specific training are consistent and creative in their strategies for dealing with minor disputes, such as countdown timers to ensure equipment is shared fairly between all. Excellent distraction techniques, like puppets, are used by quick thinking staff to capture children's interest as children become excitable during a group time. Children's behaviour is consistently good, staff model calm and polite behaviour and good manners. They use positive reinforcement and give excellent explanations about the need for rules, posters are displayed to further reinforce these. Children are supported extremely well in managing their own disputes and communicating their needs. Supportive and attentive staff encourage children to reason and negotiate with one another very well. Good behaviour is rewarded with praise and shared with parents at the end of the session.

The partnership with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education is outstanding. Parents are made extremely welcome into the nursery by friendly and approachable staff. They come in to collect their children and are clearly relaxed and at home as they chat with staff and take their children's work. Parents have excellent opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. Pre-arranged appointments enable parents to share children's profiles and records and discuss their child's progress. Photograph albums showing children enjoying activities are linked to areas of learning and consequently parents have a clear understanding of how

children learn in the Foundation Stage. Effective and simple systems including regular newsletters give parents excellent information regarding the different areas of learning. An extremely informative notice board provides relevant and up to date information regarding recent updates and nursery news. Parents speak extremely positively about the nursery detailing many aspects of the excellent practice including the special family atmosphere and systems of communication. A robust complaints procedure is readily available should it be required. Detailed and informative written agreements provide details of children's needs in order that they can be looked after according to parent's wishes.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for by extremely well-qualified and dedicated staff who have a excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities in meeting children's individual needs. Children are safeguarded by highly professional recruitment and vetting procedures, including a successful procedure for the induction of new staff and regular appraisals of existing staff. Students and volunteers are managed extremely well as they are given clear written guidance about their roles and are effectively supervised by staff, ensuring children's safety. Staff are vigilant to ensure children are never left alone with adults who have not been suitably vetted. Staff wear uniforms with the setting logo, giving them a clear professional identity and ensuring they are easily identifiable to children and parents.

Children's care, learning and play are significantly enhanced by effective organisation of all aspects of the provision, this is supported and underpinned by the highly effective operational plan. Staff have an excellent working knowledge of the National Standards and how to promote outstanding outcomes for children. They work effectively as a team to continually review policies and procedures to keep them up-to-date with current guidance and to embrace ongoing improvement. Children experience excellent levels of supervision and direct attention as the setting offers adult to child ratios which are above and beyond those defined in the conditions of registration. This ensures there are always ample staff available to cover for staff absence or emergencies. Daily attendance of staff and children is recorded in line with requirements which contributes positively to children's safety and well-being.

The leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding. Staff work efficiently as a cohesive and committed team, as they share the passion to ensure the aims and objectives of the nursery are evident in all areas of their practice. The supervisor has an excellent ability to deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum, whilst ensuring all staff are consulted and involved in planning. As a result, children experience consistency in the teaching they receive. Children benefit significantly as staff work closely with advisors from the local authority and evidently act upon any advice given. Staff effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching through discussions at frequent staff meetings, comprehensive completion of the self-evaluation form and evaluating the effectiveness of individual activities. Staff appraisals provide valuable opportunities for all staff to reflect on their individual strengths and ensure their training needs are identified and prioritised. Several members of staff are currently accessing degree level courses to ensure they continually reflect and develop their practice and strongly focus on providing outstanding outcomes for children.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the nursery was required to: develop the child protection statement to include the procedure to follow in the event an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. The written policy has been updated to include the procedure, all policies are regularly reviewed and updated, therefore, children are fully safeguarded and their welfare is promoted.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection, to improve the nursery education, the nursery was required to: develop the planning to include the adult role and grouping of children. Planning documentation was reviewed by the supervisor and all of the staff, the system used was adapted to now include the adult role and grouping of children on each daily plan. Children are effectively supported within all areas of learning and grouped appropriately during planned and spontaneous activities.

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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