

Hill West Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	228951
Inspection date	11 September 2007
Inspector	Christine Holmes
Setting Address	Clarence Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 4LD
Telephone number	0121 308 8656
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Registered person	Gill Jones
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?

Hill West Nursery opened in 1999 and operates from two single storey buildings with an enclosed grassed and paved area for outside play. It is situated on the campus of Hill West Primary School which is in the Four Oaks area of Sutton Coldfield. It has strong supportive links with the school and is able to use many of its facilities and resources. The setting is also used by 'Wagtails', an out of school group between 07:30 until 08:45 and 15:15 until 18:00, and a summer play scheme for two weeks in the summer holiday. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. This number includes children who attend out of school sessions. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:45 until 15:15 term-time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 46 children from two to eight years on roll. Of these, 32 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the surrounding residential area and the majority will attend the school. The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine staff who work with the children, of whom six hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery is part of the 'Four Oaks Children's Centre' which provides extended before and after school care.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted and protected. Staff plan activities and experiences which help them to develop an understanding and interest in healthy eating. For example, staff from the local supermarket visited the nursery to talk to the children about healthy foods. Children learn simple good hygiene practices because they are included in the daily routines. They become very independent in their own personal care and know they need to wash their hands after using the toilet. This helps to minimise cross-infection. Good arrangements are in place to meet children's medical needs. Staff have attended training events to prepare them to support children with a number of medical conditions and good arrangements are in place to ensure appropriate care is given to children in the event of illness or injury.

Children's individual dietary requirements are met in partnership with parents. Arrangements are in place to ensure children are nourished throughout the day. Some children bring their packed lunch from home and all children have the opportunity to access school meals. Snacks, including fruit, are available mid-morning and in the afternoon. Drinks are served at snack and meal times and there is a water fountain in the main play room. However, cups are not kept within reach of children which means they are not able to access the water independently.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills and enjoy fresh air. They run, jump, negotiate space, climb and ride small cars in the outdoor play area. They learn to move and control their bodies as they take part in rhythm and dance sessions, which are led by visiting instructors, and a yearly sports event is held which is attended by parents. These types of activities help children to develop a positive attitude to exercise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept very safe and secure. Effective security procedures are in place to ensure only authorised persons have entry to the buildings and children are closely supervised when playing in and outdoors. Risk assessments are carried out to identify and reduce risks and staff make daily checks of all areas. Safety equipment, including door shields designed to stop children hurting their fingers in closing doors, have been fitted. As a result, children are able to play freely and safely. Children are developing an understanding of danger and how to keep themselves safe. Planned and spontaneous activities are helping children to understand road safety. Role play equipment, including a zebra crossing, is used to help children develop concepts of danger and good road safety. Staff relate these concepts to the children's everyday experiences, including their journey to the nursery and the danger of the car park which is in front of the nursery.

Children and parents receive a warm welcome into the nursery. Staff make themselves available to provide support and encouragement to both parents and children. As a result, children become very settled and happy to stay and start to play, parents are happy to stay and settle their children and exchange information with staff. Space is suitably organised to provide a

craft and imaginative play area, a book corner, computer area and table and floor play. Children move freely and choose the direction of their play which helps develop their independence and enables them to follow their own interests. In general, the nursery has a good range of resources including a recently donated interactive wall board. However, some resources, such as craft and making materials, are not organised to allow children free access. This does not ensure children are fully benefiting from the wide range of resources.

Children are safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put procedures into practice when necessary. Comprehensive policies and procedures have been devised by the nursery and shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children form strong relationships with staff and this helps them to develop their confidence and self-esteem. They make good progress in their learning and development because the staff have a good understanding of their needs. Staff spend their time interacting with children, listening to them, encouraging them to express themselves and giving them lots of praise and encouragement. Children are often encouraged to give themselves a 'pat on the back' or a 'clap' for their efforts. Activities and experiences are often made fun which results in children's laughter and excitement. This increases children's sense of well-being and motivation to learn.

Children's development is enhanced by the broad range of planned activities which encourage children to explore and experiment. For example, children use yellow and red paint to see how the paint changes colour when mixed together on their hands. Staff organise the day to allow children plenty of time for self-initiated play. As a result, children become absorbed in activities including painting, looking at books, constructing train tracks and imaginative play.

The after school and summer play scheme care is good. Children take part in a wide range of activities linked to their interest. Nearly all of the children attending have also attended the nursery which contributes to the continuity of their care. Discussions with children demonstrate that they enjoy attending the club and enjoy the activities available.

Nursery education

Teaching and learning is good. The staff have a generally good understanding of the Foundation Stage, the stepping stones and how children learn. Planned activities and experiences are stimulating and interesting, and show the learning intentions for children across the six areas of learning. As a result, children experience a broad range of practical activities and experiences that relate to their interest and ability. For instance, children's interest in living things is supported by a visit from 'Animal Lab' where children are able to learn about, see and touch a number of creatures and animals. During the topic 'all about me', children look at themselves in the mirror to experiment and recognise expressions, and they experiment with light as they look at and chase their own shadows. They also look at the different colours of their hair and eyes and then make a graph to record their findings.

Staff use a range of teaching methods to meet children's needs and help them to progress. For instance, children receive individual attention and learn to become part of a group with staff demonstrating and encouraging skills. Staff also facilitate self-initiated learning well through providing a range of interesting resources. Behaviour is well managed and this results in a calm, caring environment.

Staff seek information from parents about what their children can do when they start nursery and they observe and record children's progress. However, at present this information is not yet fully used to identify clearly, for staff and parents, children's individual next learning steps. As a result, staff are not consistently building on what more able children can do, which limits children's progress in some areas of their learning.

Children sit and maintain good levels of concentration at discussion time, where they talk about their own experiences of recent holidays. They are interested and motivated to learn, eager to be chosen to find different colours around the room or to describe the weather outside. Their personal independence is promoted well in most areas. Children particularly benefit from the free play sessions during the day where they can be seen collecting their chosen resources to play in their chosen area of the nursery. However, this independence is not always built upon to allow more able children to develop their independence at times such as snack time.

Children's communication and language skills are supported well. Good emphasis is given to talking, listening and singing. As a result, children soon become confident to talk to staff and other children in small and large groups. Children benefit from staff modelling language and introducing new vocabulary. They are encouraged to recognise the sound letters make and learn to form recognisable letters, although children are not consistently encouraged to mark for a purpose in their play.

Children really enjoy singing and using their imagination to act out songs and rhythms that include number. Songs, including Five Little Monkeys and Five Little Ducks, are used well by staff to encourage children to compare and combine numbers. Children take part in a number of activities that develop their interest and vocabulary to describe shape and size.

Children's interest in living things and the wider world is supported well through resources and activities. Computers, an interactive board and a digital camera designed for children, support children's learning in all areas. Projects include focused observations of the life cycle of butterflies and frogs.

Children's creativity and free expression is generally supported well with a wide range of craft activities, dance and movement sessions, musical instruments and small world and role play areas. However, limited access to the wide range of craft materials limits children's self-initiated creativity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They enjoy positive relationships with the staff and with each other. Staff are kind and caring and show concern for all children which helps children to feel valued and respected as individuals. Children from different backgrounds are welcome. Staff foster positive links with children's own culture and language, involving parents. Resources positively represent the children who attend the nursery, as well as the wider community, and many festivals are celebrated. Although there are no children currently attending the nursery with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, staff work closely with parents and other professionals to meet children's individual needs.

Staff use activities and routines to help children develop an awareness of others. As a result, children play harmoniously with each other, taking turns and sharing. Appropriate strategies, such as 'count downs' and musical instruments, help children to understand when it is time to

listen and sit down. Children are praised and encouraged for their efforts and achievements which help to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

All children benefit from the positive partnership staff develop with parents. Discussions with parents demonstrate they are very happy with the quality of care their children receive and the support offered by staff. They feel staff build very good relationships with their children, are very helpful, approachable and on hand to discuss their individual children's needs. A number of parents show their appreciation of their child's care by presenting gifts and cards to the nursery and the nursery has been nominated and has received a 'Parents Recognition' award.

Partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents are consulted before their child starts the nursery which enables them to share their perception of their children's learning and development with staff. Discussions with parents demonstrate they feel their children are progressing well, particularly with their social skills and language. Parents receive information relating to the Foundation Stage in the nursery prospectus. The weekly plan of activities is displayed in the playroom and parents receive newsletters informing them of projects. Staff presently use informal day to day discussions to discuss children's ongoing progress and any concerns, and parents receive a yearly written report. However, this does not ensure parents are fully involved in their child's ongoing assessment or informed of their next steps in learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall children's needs are met. Staff are committed to providing good levels of care and education to enhance children's experiences and well-being. The nursery has achieved a Gold Award from 'Growing Together Quality Framework' from Birmingham City Council and it is part of the 'Four Oaks Children's Centre'. Staff are enthusiastic about providing a stimulating, caring environment for children. All staff are suitably qualified and experienced and there are sufficient arrangements in place to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. All relevant policies and procedures are in place to support good practice and promote children's care and welfare.

Leadership and management is good. There is clear leadership of the setting. The person in charge is a good role model who supports and encourages staff. She seeks and welcomes new ideas in order to improve her services for children. She has developed very positive links with the school. Children benefit from daily and weekly access of the school. This helps children's preparation for school and provides children with access to some of the schools resources.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to develop a risk assessment of the premises, to include procedures for allegations made against staff in the child protection policy and to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. Good improvement has been made in all areas. Risk assessments are now in place which effectively ensure children are able to play freely and safely and the child protection policy is now comprehensive and fully understood by staff. This helps to ensure children are safeguarded.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery was asked to organise groups more effectively to ensure they meet the needs of both younger and more able children. The additional of a second playroom has enabled staff to meet the needs of both younger and more able children. The nursery was also asked to extend the opportunities for older and more able children

to practise early writing skills. Improvements have been made in this area. Plans demonstrate how children took part in activities last term to develop their skills in formulating letters. However, opportunities for children to practise emergent writing remains an area for improvement.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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):

- keep cups within reach of children so they can access drinking water at all times.
- improve children's access to the wide range of craft and making resources.

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):

- continue to develop the assessment system to identify children's next steps in learning in order to ensure children are building upon what they can already do and include parents in this process.
- use daily routines to encourage children's independence and continue to provide more opportunities for children to practise early writing skills.

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