

Highfield Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY337155
Inspection date	06 July 2007
Inspector	Deborah Kerry
Setting Address	Highfield Nursery School, Chesterfield Drive, IPSWICH, IP1 6DW
Telephone number	01473 742534
E-mail	ht.highfield@talk21.com
Registered person	Highfield Nursery School Governing Body
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Crèche

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?

Highfield Children's Centre opened in 2006 to serve the local community. The centre comprises of a day nursery, which is open each weekday for 50 weeks of the year from 08.00 to 18.00; the Local Authority Highfield Nursery which runs funded sessions each morning and afternoon during term time; a crèche to support parents and carers attending the centre; and a variety of courses and drop-in support groups for parents, carers and their families. The centre provides family support services, with regular visits from health visitors and midwives. There are two family support practitioners and a first steps worker that works closely with all staff and settings within the centre. All services are housed in a purpose-built building with a secure, enclosed outdoor play area for the children. A maximum of 24 children may attend the day nursery which provides free early education and the crèche offers a maximum of 12 places. There are currently 34 children aged from two to five years on roll in the day nursery. Of these, nine are in receipt of funding for early education. The setting supports children with additional needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

A steering group oversees the operations of the centre. There is an overall centre manager. She is supported by a management team which includes the day nursery manager, the nursery

teachers, first steps worker and the family support practitioners. There are six staff who work with children in the day nursery. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is extremely well promoted as staff take positive steps to maintain a clean, healthy environment. Children are developing an excellent understanding of personal hygiene as they know that they need to wash off the "jumping germs" before eating and after using the toilet. Children's health is further promoted through the good hygiene routines that staff follow. For example, tables are sprayed and cleaned before the children eat, staff wash their hands and wear aprons when preparing and serving food. There are excellent procedures in place for changing nappies, cleaning up after accidents and when supporting children with potty training which prevents the spread of infections. There is a record on the routine of cleaning all toys and equipment to ensure that everything is included to maintain the high standards of cleanliness and hygiene.

Children's health and dietary needs are recorded and respected, staff have photographs of children and their allergies displayed so that all staff can be aware of what they are. Parents were consulted on the menus to ensure that their children like and enjoy the food that is on offer. Children are provided with a range of meals and snacks that includes a variety of fresh/dried fruit, vegetables and salad which promotes their health effectively. Children are provided with topics and discussion on foods they should eat to support their healthy growth and development. Staff carry out daily checks on the fridge and freezer to ensure that all food is stored at the correct temperature. Children are able to help themselves to water at any time, ensuring that they have sufficient for their needs.

Children's physical development is enhanced in a variety of ways. For example, they can access the outside play area throughout the sessions, with the range of large equipment that is available and have opportunities to use the community room for movement, dance and exercise. Children can sleep according to their own needs and are provided with mats which are placed in the book area away from other children. Children are free to sit quietly or look at books if they need to rest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

There are colourful displays of children's work on the topics that they have covered which creates a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere. The entrance doors to the centre are kept locked except at set times, at the start and end of nursery school sessions, this ensures that children's safety is a high priority. The secure outside play area allows for children to move through to the different areas within the setting which enables them to access the different resources and range of large equipment to enhance their healthy growth effectively. The outside area of the day nursery now has canopy which allows children to experience the outside environment in all weathers, further promoting their development.

Staff undertake daily checks which ensures that children are protected from potential hazards. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place for all areas, activities and cleaning materials used on the premises, which helps to maintain children's safety effectively. The caretaker cleans

and checks all areas each night ensuring children's safety is a priority. The emergency evacuation procedures are practised on a regular basis at different times, ensuring that all children develop an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Children are encouraged to look after their own resources as they help to put them away when they have finished with them.

There are comprehensive policies and procedures in place to promote the welfare and safety of children that follow the local safeguarding children procedures. All staff have a thorough knowledge on their responsibilities for maintaining children's health and welfare and the procedures that they should follow. Contact numbers and the flow chart for safeguarding children referrals are displayed in the office for staff to access if needed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are provided with a stimulating range of resources and activities on a daily basis which fully enhances their overall development. Resources and activities are set out in within children's reach so they are able to self select which helps to promote their independence well. Children have free access to a range of both natural and man made materials in their art and craft work. Children under three are fully supported in their learning and all planned activities are adapted to ensure that younger children can participate fully. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enable children of all abilities to move on in their development. Staff make regular observations on the activities that children are interested and involved with, this gives staff a clear picture of children's progress for when they start funding for early education. Children have a positive attitude to learning, they are happy, settled and purposefully engaged.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

All staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage and all work together to plan a range of stimulating activities, as a result children are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Staff get down to the children's level and offer appropriate support when needed which enhances children's learning and development. Staff plan an effective and balanced curriculum and use observations to inform future planning around children's interests. The key worker system allows staff to get to know children well which helps them to motivate children who are eager to try new experiences. Planning shows the area of learning, resources and includes graduated stepping stones so that children of all abilities are included, can join in and make good progress. Planning includes activities for the inside and outside area ensuring that the whole learning environment is included to enrich children's experiences.

Staff work well as a team and provide a calm, relaxed atmosphere where children thrive. When starting parents complete an 'all about me' booklet which informs staff of their child's starting points and enables them to plan activities to move them on to the next step in their learning. Children's next step is discussed with parents so that a joint decision is reached when looking at areas for development, this ensures that parents are fully involved with their child's early education. Children's achievements are recorded in both writing and in photographs and used to inform future planning, ensuring they are meeting children's individual needs. Staff have a flexible approach to planning, there is a balance of adult and child led activities which enables children to learn at their own pace.

Children have made strong relationships with other staff and their peers, actively seeking them out to include them in their play. Children are able to concentrate and persevere at self chosen tasks, they talk confidently among themselves and have developed an excellent understanding on sharing and taking turns when playing. Children all help to tidy away resources and staff give them clear explanations on expected behaviour which helps them to behave well. Children have developed a good understanding on their local community as they go shopping to buy fruit for their snack.

Staff purposefully engage children in discussions around the activities in hand and as they look at photos which develops their communication and thinking skills well. Children relish storey time as they join in with their favourite stories that some have learnt off by heart. Children have many opportunities to write and make marks both inside and outside, the well resourced writing area captures children's interests as more able children write their own names on their work as they create pictures and write letters.

Children confidently recognise and can count up to 16 without support. Snack time provides opportunities for children to count pieces of fruit and discuss the shapes of the food that they eat. For example, staff ask children if the cheese is cut into squares or rectangles. Through playing Dominos, children calculate and compare the number and pictures to match the dominos together. Staff use mathematical language with children when they make pasta necklaces as they ask if their piece of string is "long enough". Children use tape measures to compare the size and length of different objects within the nursery environment.

Children learn about their environment as they plant seeds, water them and observe their growth, when of sufficient size they plant them up outside. Children pour and fill in the water tray and discuss what happens to ice when it is put into water, children say "it will melt when it gets hot". Staff also ask children what would happen if the ice stuck together and a child replies "it would be an iceberg". Children have opportunities to build and construct both inside and outside, with large wooden blocks and stickle bricks. Children have developed excellent mouse control skills from playing a range of age appropriate games on the computer, they are provided with calculators and have tills in their 'garden shop' where they sell flowers and seeds. Through the routine of the session and a photographic time line children are developing an awareness of time. Their sense of place is promoted through the topic of homes and buildings that they see and live in. Throughout the year a variety of different world festivals are celebrated which develops children's awareness of other cultures and beliefs.

Children are eager to access the range of equipment outside for their physical development, as they enjoy daily exercise and fresh air. Children have opportunities to run, jump, climb, slide, kick, throw and can push and pull prams and 'lawnmowers' as they manoeuvre carefully around each other outside. Children enjoy moving like animals that they have seen at the zoo as they crawl, slither and jump inside. Children have access to a extensive range of tools and equipment to support their hand eye coordination. Children pour themselves drinks after being outside as they say they are thirsty.

Children enjoy a range of media such as clay, play dough, pasta, cooked spaghetti, fresh compost, rice and salt to support their creativity. Children have opportunities to experiment with sound and rhythm as they take turns creating different sounds with a variety of musical instruments from around the world. Children listen to a variety of different music and songs during the day as they play and join in with singing familiar songs and rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children and parents are welcomed into the setting. Staff greet everyone with friendly open gestures and take time to talk to parents individually. Staff work closely with parents in supporting their children, to help them settle and to ensure that their needs are well met. Children are provided with a range of resources, topics and different foods to try which helps them to develop a good understanding of the wider world. Staff have undertaken additional training to enable them to fully support children with additional needs, individual educational plans are prepared in consultation with outside professionals and parents to ensure that all children make progress in their development.

Staff are excellent role models for children, they encourage good manners, give clear explanations on expected codes of behaviour which helps to develop children's understanding of how to behave well. The staff are consistent in their management of children's behaviour which is handled in a calm, sensitive and positive way to enhance and maintain children's self esteem. Children who display helpful, positive behaviour are rewarded with praise and stickers which fosters further positive behaviour. For example, children help to put away resources and hang up their aprons after painting and are praised for their "excellent tidying up". Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

When children start parents have an induction which ensures that they are given all essential information about the day care and are made aware of all policies and procedures. The notice board at the entrance to the nursery gives information on weekly menus, snacks and the daily routine. There is a parent's comments book and details of how to make a complaint displayed should they have concerns about the care their child receives. Parents also complete an 'all about me' booklet which enables staff to see where children are in their development so that key workers can tailor activities to meet children individual needs. Parents are given feedback both verbally and through the "my story@highfield" folders which also includes photographs to help keep parents fully informed on their child's continued development. Parents are free to take these folders home to read and add to as they wish. Displays around the 'Birth to three matters' framework informs parents how younger children are supported in their progress and development.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding.

Displays on the Foundation Stage informs parents how children in receipt of funding are supported in their early education. The prospectus gives parents detailed information on the curriculum, the six areas of learning, the early learning goals and stepping stones so they know how their children learn. The recent parents evening provided an opportunity for parents to discuss their child's progress, the next step in their learning was discussed which ensures that parents are kept fully informed with their child's education. The children's centre as a whole sends out a newsletter to parents to inform them of the different groups, support and advice that is available each week. The day care has recently sent out their own newsletter to keep parents fully informed of all topics, activities and events within the setting that their children participate. Parents are invited to further support their children's early education by coming in and sharing any talents, to read stories and to get involved with the activities provided. Parents are invited to bring in items to support topics and themes and to choose books with their children to take home and read from the large library near the entrance.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

A variety of local groups and parents use the centre's facilities during the day. There are regular visits from health visitors and midwives. The centre has a family support practitioner on site, who works closely with the staff ensuring that all children who attend the centre are fully supported to enable them to make progress in their development. There are clear, effective procedures in place for induction of new staff which ensures that they have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The centre also operates a mentor system for new staff, which enables them to talk through any issues for clarification which ensures they are fully supported in their roles. There are excellent, well established links with the nursery school teaching staff and other staff located at the centre, who all work together to effectively meet the needs of all children that attend.

There is a clear system in place for registration which shows who is on the premises at all times. Through discussions and appraisals the manager is able to monitor staff training, funding is available to support their continued development. The operational plan contains a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to effectively support the management of the centre and children's continued development.

Leadership and management is outstanding.

Staff have meetings each term with the overall manager of the children's centre and nursery school staff to ensure the smooth running of the centre. Day care and nursery school staff share their planning so that themes and topics can be extended with children who attend both settings. Staff work well as a team and communicate effectively amongst themselves on children's needs. There are regular staff meetings for planning and each week the manager and deputy meet to ensure the smooth running of the day care and to evaluate planning and the staff's good practice. A staff training and development plan is in place to promote their continued development and good practices. Staff work effectively with other practitioners within the centre, they accompany them on home visits to ensure that children's overall needs continue to be met well. There is a high adult to child ratio which ensures that children are given plenty of support and are able to get the best from their learning. Staff use effective questioning techniques to promote children's thinking and language skills.

Overall children needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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