

Hickory House Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219941
Inspection date	07 August 2007
Inspector	Ann Austen
Setting Address	5 High Street, High Street, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 4BG
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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hickory House Day Nursery opened in 1996 and operates from a three storey building, in the Daventry area of Northamptonshire. A maximum of 55 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 52 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 74 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from Daventry and the surrounding villages.

The nursery employs ten staff members. Eight members of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean environment where they are beginning to learn the importance of hygiene and personal care through daily routines. For example, children wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals. This sustains levels of hygiene and helps to prevent the spread of infection. However, this is not always sufficiently reinforced by the staff, and staff do not always ensure that the tables are wiped before snack or check the toilets regularly throughout the day to ensure they remain clean. Children's welfare is safeguarded because their individual and personal needs are discussed with parents to ensure that their health and medical needs are identified and adhered to. Staff have up-to-date first aid knowledge, and clear procedures are in place in the event of accidents, for the administration of medication and if children are unwell.

Special dietary requirements are complied within partnership with the parents, and records are kept of any special food requirements. Staff are knowledgeable about children's dietary needs and provide accordingly. For example, they ensure that the feeding patterns of babies are consistent with their routines at home. Menus are produced to give parents information about meal choices, which includes dishes from other cultures. For example, children enjoy curry and rice, chicken, cheese pie and fresh vegetables. However, fresh drinking water is not accessible to the children. As a result children may become dehydrated. Meal times are relaxed, social occasions where children and adults sit together around the table to enjoy their food, each others company and develop good table manners.

Children's physical development is fostered through a range of appropriate activities both inside and outside the nursery. They are able to rest and sleep according to their individual routines, as discussed with parents. Children climb on the climbing frame, play the 'twister' game and enthusiastically move the parachute in different directions. They balance on the stilts, play skittles, throw and catch balls and rock their bodies on the see-saw. This helps children to develop the confidence to enjoy moving with control, using their bodies in a variety of ways. Older children have opportunities for more challenging physical activities when they visit the local activity centre. Babies are encouraged to try out their developing skills, for example, staff encourage babies to crawl, stand and walk. Children enjoy activities which develop their hand to eye coordination. For example, children handle tools, such as, scissors, build with construction resources and manipulate dough.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. This is enhanced by colourful murals, photographs of the children, displays of the children's work and posters depicting, for example, opposites, colours, the alphabet and numbers. Children use appropriate resources, furniture and equipment, which support their play and development. However, children do not always have sufficient opportunities to select further resources and play materials to fully promote their play and development. Staff check the resources to ensure that they remain safe and suitable for the children's individual needs.

Children are cared for in a secure environment. Staff carefully monitor access to the premises by using the intercom system and a CCTV camera is in place. A record of visitors is maintained.

Management conduct regular risk assessments to identify and reduce potential hazards and clear written documentation is maintained. Staff are aware of children's developing abilities and ensure that appropriate safety equipment is used according to the ages and needs of the children attending. For example, babies are safely strapped in harnesses when they sit in high chairs, safe barriers are in place and electric sockets are fitted with socket covers. Adults are appropriately deployed to ensure that children are well supervised. As a result children are able to move around safely and independently. Children are beginning to learn the importance of keeping safe by responding to the guidelines set out by the staff. For example, children learn about what to do in an emergency by practising the fire escape plan, to behave sensibly on outings and to cross the road safely. Staff ensure that children are safe in the sun by applying sun cream in consultation with parents and encouraging the children to wear a hat. Children's welfare is safeguarded by the staff's knowledge of local child protection procedures and their understanding of their responsibilities for the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and enjoy their time at the nursery. They are eager to participate in the activities provided which promote their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Staff implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework to promote the development of younger children. Children are confident in their relationships with staff and their peers. As the children play, staff listen to and talk to the children about what they are doing. This promotes their language and intellectual development. Babies enjoy exploring using their senses. They feel the soft spaghetti and alphabet cubes, handle different textured materials, such as, the shiny colourful foil, explore activity centres, push shapes into the shaper sorter and listen to the musical resources. Babies enjoy handling bottles filled with coloured water, finger painting, playing with 'gloop', manipulating dough and playing with bubbles.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Current staff members have a varied knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. As a result, children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Planning does not currently provide sufficient information to support less experienced staff members. As a result staff do not always know how to adapt the activities to promote the learning of all children. However, a new planning system is currently being implemented. This will provide more detailed information to help support less experienced members of staff. Staff complete focussed observations and make spontaneous notes as children participate in the activities. However, observations and assessments are not sufficiently linked to the stepping stones to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals. As a result, staff are not able to accurately monitor children's achievements or identify gaps in their learning. Staff form good relationships with the children, supporting children in their learning. For example, staff help children acquire new skills, such as, cutting with scissors. However, less experienced staff members do not always sufficiently challenge and extend older, more able children's learning. Generally effective use is made of the accommodation and resources. Routines are clear and sessions generally run smoothly. However, the environment is not organised effectively to enable children to select further resources for themselves, to enable them to initiate their own play and ideas.

Children are developing a positive attitude to learning. Relationships are good at all levels, and children are learning to play cooperatively together, to share and take turns. They actively seek out others to share experiences. Children are learning to sit quietly, to listen to staff and respond

to instructions, for example, at story time, as they tidy away and as they move between rooms. Older children persist and concentrate during activities. For example, as they cut and stick, make puzzles and play games, such as, picture lotto. Children are beginning to develop their independence as they put on their aprons and wash their hands after messy play. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to develop this further, for example, at snack time.

Children interact and communicate with growing confidence and are able to make their needs known. They play games, such as, picture lotto and 'tongue twisters' to begin to distinguish one sound from another. Older children are beginning to link letters to sounds as they recognise letters in their names. However, this is not always sufficiently reinforced by staff throughout the session. Children enjoy listening to stories such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' anticipating familiar phases and answering relevant questions. Through the provision of mark-making resources children learn to communicate with marks and pictures, as they draw, chalk and paint. However, children do not always have sufficient mark-making resources in the role play area to develop their skills further. Older children are beginning to form recognisable letters as they write their names. Children are beginning to develop their counting and number recognition skills, however, this is not spontaneously reinforced by all staff throughout the day. They are beginning to develop their understanding of calculation as they enthusiastically sing number songs and rhymes, such as, 'five little fireman standing in a row' and 'five current buns in a bakers shop'. However, older more able children have insufficient opportunities to develop their understanding of calculation and problem solving further during practical activities and everyday routines. Children are beginning to use language to describe shape, size and position.

Children have opportunities to learn about the world around them through first hand experiences. They visit the local community, for example, the library and local shops, where they buy ingredients for cooking activities. Children enjoy visits from the fire service and learn how the equipment works. They learn about the changing seasons and hunt for mini-beasts, such as, caterpillars in the garden. Children show wonder and excitement as they place the caterpillars in the jar and search for leaves for them to eat. They plant sunflowers seeds to observe growth and learn to care for living things, such as, the guinea pig. Children build robots out of recycled materials and handle construction resources, such as, 'Duplo' and 'K'nex' successfully, copying pictures to make colourful butterflies. A computer and programmable toys are provided to support children's learning, however, these are not always available to the children throughout the day.

Children explore a range of media and materials. They have fun as they play with the sand, water, pasta, dough and spaghetti. Children enjoy creative art activities. They use different textured materials to make collage pictures of dragons, paint with their feet, decorate pumpkins, make furry cat masks and paint pasta necklaces. Older children differentiate colours with growing confidence. Children enjoy using their imaginations in role play, and take on family roles or those of familiar people in the community. For example, children pretend to purchase items of food from the shop and play in the home corner. Children use their imaginations as they play with small world resources such as the farm set, dolls house and road way. However, they do not have access to additional resources to enable them to fully extend and develop their own ideas as they play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the nursery because staff value and respect their individuality. Relationships are warm, caring and friendly. Children are welcomed by a member of staff on

arrival and children settle well. They have a sense of belonging and clear routines to the day help young children feel secure and settled. For example, sleep and feeding routines are respected. Children have good opportunities to learn about themselves and to appreciate diversity through a variety of play materials and planned activities that reflect the community and wider world. For example, children make Chinese lanterns, copy Chinese writing and colour the Chinese flag to celebrate the Chinese New Year and draw henna pictures to celebrate Diwali. Children handle resources, such as, books, dolls and puzzles that acknowledge other cultures and help children appreciate the needs of people with disabilities. They behave and respond well to the staff's appropriate behaviour management strategies that take into account their age and stage of development. Children receive positive support, praise and encouragement which builds their confidence and self-esteem. Staff help the children to develop their understanding of right and wrong as they respond to gentle reminders to share and be kind to one another. As a result, children begin to learn what is expected of them. Currently there are no children with difficulties and/or disabilities or children who speak English as a second language attending the nursery but staff have experience and ensure that they work with parents and other professionals to meet each child's needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's care, welfare and learning are promoted because relationships with parents are open, friendly and professional. This helps to ensure that children are settled and secure. All parents and carers are made welcome in the nursery and have access to the policies and procedures, including the complaints procedure. Parents are able to give feedback and suggestions in the suggestion box and comments book. Detailed informative information is posted on the walls, for example, information relating to the 'birth to three matters' framework and information about the inclusion of all children within the nursery. Information about the care of the children and their achievements is shared verbally each day and through the use of photographic displays. Parents speak positively about the setting.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. However, parents are not encouraged to share what they know about their child when they enter the Foundation Stage, or provided with further opportunities to contribute to the assessment process throughout their time in the nursery to help plan the next stage in their children's learning. Parents are able to speak to staff at any time, however, they do not have sufficient opportunities to discuss children's achievements and progress towards the early learning goals. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning. For example, parents are encouraged to help children differentiate colours, to support correct letter formation and to observe things in the environment. Children are able to choose books to share with their parents at home and are encouraged to bring in items from home for the interest table.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children feel at home and at ease in the nursery. Designated rooms and areas for each age group means that children are able to move safely and independently between activities. There are clear routines to the day which staff adapt, as needed, in order to accommodate children's individual routines. For example, the routines of babies and younger children are respected. Children are able to play, eat and sleep comfortably. They play independently as well as receiving adult support and encouragement. However, children have insufficient opportunities to select further resources to fully extend their play and ideas. Adult to child ratios ensure that children are safe and well supervised. Children's welfare, care and learning is promoted by a good range

of well-organised records, policies and procedures, which are available to parents. Records are stored securely and confidentiality is maintained. Management ensures that staff members are fully vetted and suitable to work with children. Staffing levels are good and a large majority of staff hold early years qualifications and have relevant experience. Senior members of staff have clear, defined roles and responsibilities and induction procedures ensure that new staff members are fully informed, included and valued. Systems are in place to evaluate and monitor performance, and staff are proactive in attending training courses to enhance their skills and knowledge.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. Management and staff are committed to continually improve the care and education for the children. They regularly reflect on their practice, which allows the group to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Systems are in place for staff recruitment, induction and appraisal, and the professional development of staff is actively promoted. Management is continuing to develop systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of nursery education. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to improve two aspects of their practice. Staff are continuing to take positive steps in order to prevent the spread of infection. For example, children wash their hands after using the toilet and before meals. However, this is still not always sufficiently reinforced by the staff, and staff do not always ensure that the tables are wiped before snack or check the toilets regularly throughout the day to ensure they remain clean. The organisation of snack time has improved. Meal times are now relaxed, social occasions where children and adults sit together around the table to enjoy their food, each others company and develop good table manners.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the nursery was asked to revise the planning framework and to provide more opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning. A new planning system is currently being implemented to provide more detailed information to help support less experienced members of staff. This will enhance children learning and development. Systems have now been developed to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. For example, parents are encouraged to help children differentiate colours and to support correct letter formation. This helps children's to continue their learning and development at home.

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 by Ofsted.

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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 staff understand the importance of good hygiene practice in order to prevent the spread of infection and ensure that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- increase the opportunities for children to access further resources to encourage them to initiate their own play and learning (also applies to nursery education).

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 staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage, including teaching methods, to ensure that there is sufficient challenge for older more able children and that staff know how to adapt the activities to promote the learning of all children
- ensure that observations and assessments are sufficiently linked to the stepping stones to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals and used to plan the next steps in learning for individual children
- develop systems to encourage parents to share what they know about their child when they enter the Foundation Stage and to contribute to the assessment process to help plan the next stage in their children's learning, and ensure that parents receive regular information about children's achievements and progress towards the early learning goals.

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