

# Heathfield Pre-school and North Lodge Baby unit

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY279901
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Rachel Wyatt
<b>Setting Address</b>	Heathfield School, Wolverley Road, Wolverley, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY10 3QE
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<b>Registered person</b>	Heathfield Educational Trust
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are 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?

Heathfield Pre-School and North Lodge baby unit is the early years section of Heathfield School, an independent co-educational day school for children aged from three months to 16 years. The school is located in the Wolverley area of Kidderminster, with the pre-school and baby unit operating from separate buildings within the school grounds. The pre-school and baby unit registered in 2004 and provide full day care, out of school facilities and a holiday play scheme. A maximum of 55 children may attend at any one time. The baby unit is open each weekday from 08.00 to 17.50 for 50 weeks of the year. Pre-school sessions are from 09.00 to 15.30 during term time only. Children may attend a variety of sessions. Before and after school care is provided and a summer school play scheme operates from 09.00 until 15.00 each weekday during the first week of the summer holidays. All children have access to secure outdoor play areas.

There are currently 58 children from three months to eight years on roll within the baby unit and pre-school and 11 children are in the reception class. Of these, 29 children receive funding for early education. Children generally attend from the local area and surrounding districts.

Support is available for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school and baby unit employ 10 staff who work directly with the children. All staff have a relevant Level 3 early years qualifications apart from one member of staff who is currently working towards a Level 3 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because they are cared for in premises that are warm and clean. Staff clean surfaces and play areas throughout the day and make sure everywhere is comfortable and safe for babies and children. Effective procedures are in place regarding the managing and disposal of any spillages and waste.

Sound hygiene procedures throughout the setting promote children's well-being. Toddlers and pre-school children's independence in seeing to their personal hygiene is aided by discreet staff support and their access to child-size wash basins and toilets in all areas. Children clearly understand the importance of good hand washing, talking about removing dirt and avoiding germs. Staff ensure children's personal hygiene needs are also met, for example, on outings or after handling animals. Babies and younger children's comfort and hygiene are assured during regular, well-managed nappy changes. Toddlers' toilet training is introduced when children are ready and is calmly managed.

Children's awareness of aspects of a healthy lifestyle are fostered during topics. Toddlers recently discussed the importance of having clean bodies and clothes, whilst children in pre-school have looked at dental hygiene, healthy eating and the impact of physical exercise on their bodies. They also learn about caring for other living things, so that children in pre-school help to look after the setting's gold fish and regularly feed the birds.

Children's health is promoted because their care routines, and medical and dietary needs are understood and provided for by staff. From the outset, parents are asked to provide information about these, including details of their child's medical history. Risks of cross-infection are minimised as the setting follows current sickness exclusion requirements, and ensures parents are kept well informed of matters relating to their children's health. In the event of a child being unwell, having an accident or needing medication prompt appropriate treatment is given and parents are kept fully informed. Accident and medication records include all relevant details, although the format of medication records does not fully promote privacy and confidentiality. Most parents have been asked to give their consent to the setting seeking emergency medical advice and treatment for their child but there are a few omissions which potentially compromises those children's well-being in such circumstances. In other respects the school is well organised to care for children who are unwell or have a minor injury as most early years staff have first aid qualifications and the school's matron is on hand to give help and support.

All children have regular opportunities to be physically active and to play outside. Babies and younger toddlers enjoy the enclosed outside play area at North Lodge. Babies are taken on walks in the school grounds. Age-appropriate indoor toys and equipment also help babies and younger toddlers to develop confidence in balancing and movement. Pre-school children are energetic and physically confident. They have regular outdoor play times when they competently

use a range of apparatus and equipment. Well-organised physical education sessions and fun music and movement activities promote children's coordination and control as they move in different ways, developing a growing awareness of space. Babies and children's rest needs are met. Babies' and toddler's settling and sleep routines are followed whilst quieter activities, including story times and unhurried meal times, ensure older children are able to relax.

Babies and children are well nourished. Babies' feeds and meals are safely stored and prepared according to their needs and their parents' wishes. Children have healthy snacks, including pieces of fresh or dried fruit. Lunch menus include vegetables, salad items and fruit. Meals are freshly prepared and take account of children's dietary needs. They have plenty to drink, as fresh water is readily available, and staff remind children about having enough to drink. Snack and meal times are enjoyable, social occasions with children and staff sitting together. Children become increasingly adept at managing cutlery and feeding themselves.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment because they use premises that are suitable, welcoming, clean and well-maintained. Effective planned maintenance ensures children are looked after in brightly decorated and inviting surroundings and play in secure outside areas. Staff's use of risk assessments and regular safety checks ensure that security is maintained, faulty equipment is promptly repaired and any other hazards are swiftly identified and addressed.

Babies and children use a good range of high quality, well-maintained toys, furniture and equipment which are suitable for their ages and stage of development. For example, the youngest children play with sturdy bright toys that are easy to handle and explore, with parts that can be twisted, pulled, pushed or fitted together. Wheeled toys with handles and activity centres on legs give babies confidence when they pull themselves up to standing and begin to walk. Children are able to help themselves to many toys, because throughout the early years setting many resources are stored at their height and containers are labelled with pictures of the contents.

Children's safety is supported by the staff's effective supervision. However, children are also encouraged to have an awareness of how to reduce the risk of accidents to themselves or others. They clearly understand why they need to walk when going to the sports hall, explaining they might fall if they run. They understand how to safely use and store tools such as scissors or small hammers and nails during play with small wooden shapes. They manage physical play apparatus confidently and sensibly, staff appropriately intervening to remind children about allowing space between each other on climbing apparatus.

Children and adults learn how to protect themselves during unforeseen circumstances because there are clear evacuation procedures which are practised regularly. Outings are well-managed to ensure children's safety and enjoyment. Children stay in small groups with key staff and are reminded about keeping together. The setting has appropriate contingency arrangements relating to a child being lost or separated from the group. On a daily basis, effective arrival and collection procedures ensure children's safety so that they leave with someone nominated by their parents and known to the staff.

Children are safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection. They have a sound knowledge of the symptoms of child abuse and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child. Most staff have been on safeguarding children training and have ready

access to the setting's child protection policy and associated national and local guidance. Children are also safeguarded because the child protection policy includes correct procedures to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or a volunteer. Parents are aware of the school's responsibility for safeguarding children as the child protection policy is included in the parents' handbook.

Children's ongoing welfare is monitored, for example, because accidents, incidents and any existing injuries are recorded and reviewed. Parents are encouraged to discreetly alert staff to any changes in circumstances which may affect children's demeanour or behaviour. In a reassuring environment children are sensitively introduced to strategies which could help them to protect themselves. For example, staff promote children's discussions about feelings, including managing more difficult situations which might make them feel sad or uncomfortable.

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

The provision is good.

Children's progress and development is effectively supported because staff plan rewarding activities offering young children a range of toys, games and experiences. Children attending the school's out of school club and holiday play scheme enjoy worthwhile activities and experiences in familiar surroundings.

Babies' and children's play and learning needs are clearly understood. Staff are fully involved in their routines and activities so they know children well. The setting's robust assessment procedures mean that children's progress is effectively monitored and adults are aware of each child's abilities. Planning for older toddlers and children in receipt of nursery education clearly reflects their differing needs. However, babies' and younger children's progress is not fully supported because short term plans lack detail about how activities are intended to promote their skills and understanding.

Babies and younger children benefit from increasing opportunities for exploratory play. Staff are enthusiastic about providing child-centred, play based activities, encouraged by ideas gained from attending courses and good practise sessions focusing on provision for children under three. Babies happily handle and investigate sturdy toys of different shapes, sizes and textures. Toddlers freely explore their toys and surroundings. They love being active and playing outside. They enjoy role play, colouring and mark-making and building with different construction toys. Babies and young children investigate the texture and properties of a variety of materials such as paint, resources for gluing and collage, play dough, shaving foam and corn flour 'silk'.

Older toddlers enjoy worthwhile topics, for example, featuring nursery rhymes. Children sing their favourite songs such as 'Twinkle twinkle little star' and then take part in associated activities such as making a collage or models of stars. Their understanding of number, shape and colour is fostered effectively during these and other activities. Two-year-olds and younger three-year-olds are developing an awareness of letter sounds and shapes through practical activities such as creating a colourful painting to represent the letter of the week. Their pencil control and emergent writing is fostered during regular colouring and mark-making activities. Babies and children all enjoy looking at books and stories, staff generally encouraging attentive listening. However, the book area for younger toddlers is cramped, restricting their free choice of books and opportunities to relax.

Babies and children benefit from the support and involvement of kind and caring adults. The consistent care of a key worker helps to reassure babies and children so they settle quickly and

soon join in activities and play. Young children's developing speech and language and positive relationships are fostered by staff who chat easily to them and promote their conversations. Children's sharing and turn taking is encouraged so that their play with their peers becomes increasingly involved. For example, during much enjoyed imaginative play, children work together to develop their ideas such as creating a train from a line of chairs and going on a journey to the seaside. Each child finds something to take with them such as a doll, notepad, towel, bag or a spade. Younger children enjoy playing in the home corner and using domestic play equipment, although their ideas and involvement are sometimes affected by the limited space available.

## Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In pre-school and reception, children's learning is promoted by rewarding topics focusing on, for example, nursery rhymes, toys and winter. Activities and lessons are well planned, take account of children's differing abilities, and are clearly linked to all aspects of the Foundation Stage areas of learning. Children's skills and understanding are promoted and extended as a result of the staff's good teaching. Children's individual abilities and levels of understanding are clearly acknowledged as a result of consistent assessment which provides staff and parents with a clear overview of how children are progressing. Children make good steady progress as realistic individual goals are agreed for each child to work towards, and staff adapt their approaches and resources according to their differing needs. Activities and lessons are well paced, providing children with a good balance of practical activities and written work which reinforce and extend their understanding. Younger and less able children have good support, whilst more able pupils are given appropriate challenges, for example, in mathematics, reading and writing.

Children are confident learners because their choices are acknowledged. Their ideas and understanding are enriched by access to relevant, stimulating toys and resources. These include cameras, sound systems and programmable and pretend-play toys reflecting technology. However, children do not routinely use information technology to support and extend their understanding of different concepts or in order to present their work or ideas in a different way.

Children are purposeful, eager learners. They know what is expected of them as staff clearly explain activities and tasks, and involve themselves appropriately to ensure children understand and persevere. Children are self-motivated, for example, during free-play sessions in pre-school when they readily express their ideas. Then children often spontaneously demonstrate their knowledge and skills, for example, as they competently practise writing for a purpose in the role play area toy shop or office, or they count, order and match items such as small world animals according to size and type. Children in reception are eager to contribute to group discussions or, for instance, to write a new letter sound combination on the board. They are often absorbed in getting on with their own work, whilst children who find concentrating more difficult have effective help and guidance.

Praise and rewards such as a special sticker or badge are used effectively by all staff to acknowledge children's efforts. Children's choice and independence are fostered well so that they increasingly manage their own self-care routines, including getting ready for physical activities and outside play. Children take responsibility for tasks such as tidying away toys and games and helping to lay the table for lunch. This provides children with additional opportunities for problem solving such as working out how many plates or how much cutlery is needed on

each table. Children are polite and often kind to their peers, helping each other and working together, for example, to decorate a child's model 'robot'.

Children are confident speakers, confidently using descriptive language when talking about their experiences, their work or exchanging information with their friends. During conversations and group discussions, children comment on what they have observed and explain their ideas, for example, as they decide on roles to be adopted during imaginative play.

Children are curious and interested in how things work. They use torches and magnifying glasses to observe a range of objects and competently cut, glue and fix different materials during their creative collage and model making. They are knowledgeable about features of the natural world, relishing opportunities to examine items such as a collection of shells. They apply their understanding of the animal world during activities. For example, during role play, children engage in an enlightening discussion about the behaviour of dogs, whilst other children confidently describe the characteristics of different wild animals during small world play.

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

The provision is good.

Every child is helped to achieve their potential. Staff are fully aware of children's interests, characteristics and their care and learning needs as a result of regular exchanges with parents and their ongoing assessments. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported. Consistent monitoring of children's responses and skills means that any concerns about an aspect of a child's development are promptly identified and addressed. Suitable strategies and levels of support are agreed as staff liaise with parents and, where appropriate, other agencies.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. In line with the setting's positive equal opportunities policy, children explore different aspects of diversity. They look at books and listen to stories depicting positive images of race, culture, disability and gender, and enjoy activities relating to different festivals such as Diwali, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Pre-school children learn about people's lives in different countries during a topic 'All around the world'. Children feel valued because aspects of their own lives and experiences are acknowledged, for instance when they talk about their families and homes. Children are able to express their ideas, make choices and express their feelings. Their efforts are praised and rewarded, and examples of their work appreciated and displayed.

Children's positive and caring attitudes are promoted. For example, during their dressing up and imaginative play a member of staff explains the role of male and female nurses to children. As part of their topic on 'winter', children in reception discuss the importance of caring for others, including animals and birds. Children behave well. Staff make sure they know what is expected of them, fostering their attentive listening, turn taking and good relationships. Children interact well with each other and adults, and play and work together cooperatively. They are often caring and supportive towards each other such as helping a friend to complete a task. Should children make inappropriate remarks or misbehave, staff ensure they understand the consequences of their words or actions.

Babies and children are fully protected as a result of effective partnerships with their parents. Children settle well, and their parents understand what the setting provides, because of good induction arrangements. When their children first start, or as they move to other areas of the school's early years' provision, they visit with their parents. This enables staff to work with

parents to assess and agree arrangements for each child's care and learning. Parents' views about their children's care, routines, interests and abilities are positively welcomed and help staff to provide children with appropriate activities and experiences.

Parents are given high quality information such as a handbook which includes key policies, including the setting's complaints procedures. This information and additional details from notice boards, leaflets, letters, displays of photographs and examples of children's work all help parents to understand how their child's care and play are promoted. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school, for example, by contributing items for topics or attending special events such as the children's teddy bears' picnic. Parents and carers appreciate the quality of the provision for their children and the approachability of the staff.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children in receipt of early education funding have their learning needs met very well. Their parents receive excellent information about the Foundation Stage which explains how their children's learning and development will be supported whilst they are in the pre-school and then in reception. Children's transition into the Foundation Stage is facilitated by opportunities for their parents to visit with them when they move to pre-school and then to reception. Parents' views about their child's abilities and progress are shared with the pre-school manager or reception class teacher during these visits so that children's starting points are identified and individual learning goals agreed. Thereafter, parents are warmly welcomed in the setting and staff give them regular informal and formal feedback, including written reports, regarding their children's progress.

Children's learning is enhanced because of their parents' involvement. Through letters and displays, parents are well informed about pre-school and reception class topics and activities. They actively contribute to their children's learning by helping them to provide items for activities, 'show and tell' sessions, and for displays and interest tables. Children's confidence in recognising letter sounds, and older and more able children's reading is effectively supported by their parents at home as a result of the pre-school and reception's well-organised home-school shared reading programmes.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's welfare is safeguarded. The school ensures that suitability checks are carried out on all staff and that they have relevant qualifications and experience. Children's safety is supported as staff are appropriately deployed, ratios are met and suitable contingency arrangements are in place to cover for staff absences or breaks. Staff keep accurate attendance registers that show times of arrival and departure of children, staff and visitors.

Children really benefit from being looked after by a consistent and caring staff team. Good staff and student induction procedures and effective team working mean that everyone capably carries out their duties, so that children enjoy smoothly run, rewarding sessions. The setting's robust training and development programme keeps staff up to date, and children's play is enriched by the ideas adults bring back to the nursery and pre-school.

Children care and learning is supported by the school's commitment to improvement. For example, children's health, safety and welfare have been enhanced as a result of prompt action taken to achieve objectives in the school's development plan relating to staff training and promoting young children's awareness of healthy lifestyles, in particular by providing more nutritious snacks and meals.



Children's care is supported by generally effective documentation. The operational plan and all required policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly. These are made available to parents and, along with other relevant guidance, are accessible for staff's reference. Records are securely stored and retained for required periods.

The leadership and management of funded children is good. Children become confident and happy learners; they have positive relationships and a good grounding in the Foundation Stage areas of learning, reflecting the school's aims for their early education. Children learn in an inviting environment, access stimulating resources and enjoy rewarding activities and lessons. They are taught by staff with a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, and who know the abilities and characteristics of each child in their group or class.

The head teacher, pre-school manager, reception teacher and all early years staff work together to ensure children access high quality early education. A commitment in the school development plan to further improve assessment has resulted in an increasingly robust system for monitoring children's progress and identifying their individual learning needs. Using this information, and the results of their consistent evaluation of topics and activities, staff plan a balanced and rewarding curriculum which helps each child to move steadily onto the next stage in their learning. Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to recommendations relating to babies' outdoor activities and arrangements for their safety during emergency evacuations. Babies' health and physical development are enhanced by regular outside play, including walks in the school grounds. The use of an evacuation trolley ensures the youngest children can be swiftly and safely moved away from any hazards, and cared for safely at the fire evacuation meeting point.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to two key issues. These related to providing children with more opportunities for imaginary and creative play, for practising their emergent writing in different contexts, and for finding out about why things happen and how things work. Pre-school children, in particular, regularly engage in imaginative and creative play. Invitingly resourced role play areas such as a toy shop and an office, prompt children's often involved and interesting scenarios. The current layout of the reception classroom restricts children's free access to imaginative play, but opportunities are incorporated as part of topics. For example, parents are helping to provide items for a 'winter clothes' shop.

Children's art, craft and modelling activities are well resourced and managed to ensure they can freely express their ideas. These experiences also give children meaningful opportunities to discover how different materials react and which items successfully can be fixed or glued together. Children confidently discover how different pieces of equipment work such as cameras, sound systems and programmable toys. During imaginative play they realistically use telephones, keyboards and calculators in the office role play area or 'electronic tills' in the toy shop. They enjoy using magnifying glasses and torches, for example, as they examine features of small world animal figures or a selection of shells.

### **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 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):

- improve the confidentiality of medication records and the procedures for ensuring all parents have been asked to provide consent to the seeking of any emergency medical advice and treatment
- improve planning for babies and younger children in order to show how activities and play opportunities promote their development, and review the organisation of younger toddlers' play areas to improve their access to books and imaginative play.

#### **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):

- develop more opportunities for children to use information technology to support their learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)