

Headstart Day & After School Care Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY271047
Inspection date	12 October 2007
Inspector	Samantha Smith
Setting Address	Afton Drive, South Ockendon, Essex, RM15 5PA
Telephone number	01708 856948
E-mail	headstartnursery@aol.com
Registered person	Headstart Day & Afterschool Care Limited
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 satisfactory. 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?

Headstart Nursery and Out of School care opened in 2003. It operates from four rooms in a converted church building in South Ockendon. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery and out of school care serves the local area.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07.30 to 19.00. A maximum of 76 children may attend the Nursery and Out of School care at any one time. There are currently 87 children from five months to eight years on roll attending for a variety of sessions. This includes 12 funded three-year-olds and one funded four-year-old. The provision supports children with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

Two part-time and 17 full-time staff work with the children, of which 13 have early year qualifications including the manager. The setting receives support from child development officers from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff encourage children to follow basic hygiene routines, such as washing their hands at appropriate times throughout the day, before eating meals and after children use the toilet. Children are also encouraged to brush their teeth after lunch. Pictures, posters and photographs are displayed in the bathroom, reminding children to wash their hands. This further supports children's health and well-being.

Appropriate hygiene procedures are in place and consistently followed by staff that contributes to preventing cross-infections and exposing children harmful bacteria. For example, gloves are worn when changing nappies and when serving food for children. Aprons are also worn when changing children's nappies.

A record is kept of all accidents and parents are required to sign their acknowledgement of these. If a child is on medication, parents are required to give written permission prior to administration and they are again required to sign their acknowledgement. However, the times recorded are not always accurate and as a result the correct information is not always passed onto the parents. Most staff are first aid qualified and there is always a qualified first aider on duty.

Children benefit from the healthy and nutritious snacks provided. Four-weekly menus are shared with the parents and information about children's diet and likes and dislikes is requested. Children eat according to their needs, for example, young babies are fed according to their routines and if asleep at lunchtime, then the food is stored appropriately and then reheated.

Children take part in regular outdoor play, where they use various resources. However, there are limited resources and this has a direct impact on some children's enjoyment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery environment is made welcoming through the use of posters, pictures and displays in the entrance hall. The premises are sufficiently maintained and adequately lit. Children have access to appropriate facilities, such as classrooms, girl's and boy's bathrooms, a quiet area and garden. Children use safe and suitable toys and resources that are in good condition. The classrooms are risk assessed regularly and staff are aware of the procedures to follow if toys are identified as broken or hazardous.

The nursery gives high regard to children's safety. Staff are vigilant in their responsibilities in this; the main door is kept locked and visitors are only permitted access by the manager or deputy. All visitors are asked to sign in the visitor's book. This ensures an accurate register is kept of people on the premises. Notices on all exits remind parents to close the door on their way out, so that children cannot leave unsupervised. Staff gain access to classrooms through the use of a key pad. There is a good system in place for the safe transport of children to and from school. Staff carry a list of the children they are transporting and a formal 'handover' takes place. The nursery collection procedures ensure that children are only collected by the named person.

Children's welfare is protected because staff have a good awareness of child protection issues. This is included in the induction programme, therefore ensuring they have an up to date knowledge and understanding of the correct procedure to follow should there be any child protection concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are well settled in the nursery. They are familiar with the nursery routine and their surroundings and as a result, this promotes a feeling of security. There are displays of children's photographs throughout the nursery which contributes to them feeling a sense of belonging. Children happily access resources which are selected and organised for them in advance and they engage in some activities that are age-appropriate.

Staff working with children under three years have a sound knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They follow baby's individual routines as set out by the parents. This includes food intake and sleeping routines. The range of activities planned for younger children are fun and challenging.

In addition staff complete observations and evaluate the progress of younger children in order to inform planning and as a result support and promote development.

Children are settled in the after-school club. They benefit from a relaxed environment, where they can do their homework, read or play with their friends. They have access to a large hall and garden area and they move around freely as they decide what they want to do.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plans show detail of a balanced curriculum. However, in practice this not always evident. This is because sometimes not enough consideration is given to planning a challenging environment which allows children to constantly access the six areas of learning. Observations and assessments are completed regularly and mostly cover the six areas of learning and are used to inform future planning. However, the next steps for each child are not consistently identified.

Children show good levels of confidence and know their surroundings well. They are developing some levels of independence as they help themselves in the toilet independently. They enjoy role play activities, where they mimic the world around them through playing with the small world play, such as buggies and home corner play. Some children show confidence in counting, however, there are limited planned opportunities for children to consistently develop there skills in number language, sorting and calculation. There are lots of opportunities provided for children to mark-make. There are displays which illustrate that text carries meaning. However, there are few opportunities for children to experience writing for a purpose, such as labelling their own work or to make a shopping list in the role play area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcome in the setting and children currently attending represent a diverse ethnic mix. However, this is not reflective throughout the nursery. For example, there are few

displays that reflect positive images and toys and resources are limited and do not form part on the daily plan or routine.

Strategies to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities include liaising closely with parents and other professionals, such as the area special needs coordinator are in place. This helps to ensure individual targets are met and children showing developmental difficulties are identified early.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children on the whole behave well and respond positively to staff because of the sensitive interaction they receive. The use of praise and encouragement for their achievements reinforces good behaviour. However, staff do not give children appropriate explanations about what is unacceptable about their behaviour. Consequently, children are not gaining a full understanding between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are welcomed into the nursery and parents of babies and young children are given good information about the setting including the curriculum the children are following. However, parents and carers of children who receive nursery education do not enjoy the same benefits because they do not receive sufficient information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result, parents are not well informed of their children's educational programme. The key worker system ensures that children progress files are updated regularly and six monthly meetings are held with the parents, keeping them regularly updated on their child's the progress their child is making.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a well-qualified and suitable group of staff. Most staff hold an appropriate childcare qualification, some a working towards a higher level and several hold a relevant first aid qualification. Recruitment and suitability procedures are appropriate and those who are not vetted are not left unsupervised with the children. Induction procedures are in place which means staff know the policies and procedures that are in place to promote the welfare of children. Many staff are committed and experienced in caring for children and to providing a good service.

Ratios are maintained and this is consolidated through the staff and children's record of attendance as they arrive in the base rooms and parents record the actual time of arrival and departure at the main front entrance. Furthermore, there are sound contingency plans in place to cover staff absences. All required documentation is in place and stored confidentially. Although a weakness is identified in the accurate recording of times that medication is given to children.

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

Staff are well supported by management who are very 'hands on' and completely aware of how the setting is running, through regular meetings between the directors and manager. The setting works closely with Early Years and an advisory teacher, as well as the area Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). This contributes to enhancing the quality of service offered to the children and ensures effective inclusion.

Staff demonstrate a committed, enthusiastic approach. Regular meetings take place to keep staff updated of ongoing practice, planning, children's development and any other daily issues. A formal appraisal system is in place and used to identify relevant training to support staff in their professional development. Staff are encouraged to attend relevant training courses to continue their professional development. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the setting has improved the provision of fresh drinking water. Young children benefit from juice bottles that are kept fully replenished and are easily accessible. Older children help themselves from a water dispenser stored in the classrooms. This supports children's developing independence as they assist their own personal needs when deciding when they want a drink. The setting has also improved their partnership with parents as they have updated the information they give to parents, including providing them with Ofsted's contact details.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received a concern on 07 June 2007 regarding National Standard 1 (Suitable person), 2 (Organisation), 3 (Care, learning and play), 6 (Safety), 7 (Health), 8 (Food and drink), 11 (Behaviour) and 12 (Working in partnership with parents and carers).

An Ofsted inspector conducted an a visit on 14 June 2007 to inspect these National Standards. During the visit the premises was inspected; observations were made, the manager and deputy were interviewed and policies and procedures were reviewed. At the visit there was evidence that National Standard 2, 6, 7 and 11 were not being met. As a result the provider was given five actions under those National Standards. A satisfactory response has been received to the actions set and the provider remains qualified for registration.

Ofsted received a concern relating to National Standard 6 (Safety) and National Standards 12 (Working in Partnership With Parents and Carers). As a result an unannounced visit was made. During the visit the Ofsted Inspector interviewed staff, reviewed documentation (including the setting's policies and procedures) and made observations of the setting. Two actions were raised, under National Standard 2 (Organisation) and National Standard 6 (Safety). All the information received and evidence gathered has been reviewed by an Inspection Team Manager. Ofsted can confirm that the registered person remains qualified for registration.

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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 accurate information is recorded when giving medication to children, this refers administration times
- ensure equal opportunities are fully supported in the setting and reflects the children attending, this should form an integral part of the day and review the behaviour policy to ensure that children are gaining a full understanding between right and wrong

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 the current observation and planning systems to ensure adaptation is consistently applied to challenge children effectively; ensure records of assessments are consistently undertaken and used by keyworkers to support children's learning and clearly identify their next steps towards all six early learning goals
- plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's mathematical and communication skills in calculation, sorting and using writing for purpose, review the provision of outdoor equipment and resources to maximise opportunities for all children
- provide information for parents and carers about the Foundations Stage curriculum enabling them to share in their child's formative years.

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