

Hermitage Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	223217
Inspection date	23 January 2008
Inspector	Susan Andrews
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Registered person	Elaine Anne Blunt
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

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

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

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

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

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

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hermitage Day Nursery is one of several settings run by the provider as part of the Swingboat Nursery group. It opened in 1999 and operates from a purposely designed building with access to an enclosed and partly covered outdoor play area. The nursery is situated in the village of Whitwick, near Coalville in Leicestershire.

A maximum of 80 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:00 all year round. Children attend various sessions.

There are currently 140 children aged under five years on roll. Of these 25 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and nearby towns and villages.

The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 28 staff. Including the manager 21 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications, including NVQ Level 2, 3 & 4 and degrees in teaching and early education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and child-oriented environment. They are able to experience a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health, such as daily exercise, fresh air and by using interesting and challenging toys and equipment that develop their physical skills. Children's personal health and hygiene is promoted well, for example, as they brush their teeth after meal times. They understand the importance of hand-washing, 'to wash away the germs' after going to the toilet, wiping their nose, messy play and before eating. Therefore, this reduces the risk of cross-infection. Staff are good role models and consistently follow effective health and hygiene procedures during daily routines. For example, they wash their own hands before serving meals, cooking activities and they are vigilant in wiping down activity tables with antibacterial sprays before serving food. Children's medical welfare is well promoted, as staff have obtained professional instruction regarding the use of an 'EpiPen', hold relevant first aid qualifications and follow clear procedures regarding the administration of medication. Consequently, staff are able to positively respond should a child become unwell or have an accident whilst in their care.

Children are well nourished and are provided with a range of healthy meals and snacks which promotes their growth and development. For example, well balanced, nutritious and innovative menus are devised and a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables are provided each day. Children have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating because they try new foods and textures as part of themed activities that develop children's understanding of which foods are good for them. Older children choose from healthy snacks, such as raisins and dried apricots, also drinks of milk, water and juice which they can access independently throughout the day. Staff ensure younger children regularly take appropriate fluids during the course of the day. They are vigilant in ensuring all children take extra fluids when the weather is hot or after physical exercise, therefore, children remain well hydrated.

Children have good opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise as they make use of the enclosed outdoor play area and on walks and outings to challenge and develop their physical skills. Their balance and co-ordination is developing well and children ably run, jump and play freely. Children have a good sense of space as they competently manoeuvre and change direction when necessary as they move to music, use the outdoor equipment or when carefully climbing the stairs. Children play safely and purposefully indoors as they handle a variety of small tools, such as paintbrushes, pencils, scissors and craft materials to develop their fine muscle control and hand and eye co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in a well-organised environment, with clearly defined activity areas. Children benefit from the use of the safely enclosed outdoor play area which has a covered area and an impact absorbent safety surface beneath the fixed play apparatus. There is sufficient indoor space between each of the activities, so that the children are able to move around comfortably, engaging in quiet and creative activities. Consequently their choice, independence and decision-making skills are promoted. Children have easy access to a varied range of safe and suitable furniture and equipment which is in good condition and checked regularly to reduce any potential hazards. Toys and resources are plentiful, varied and reflect diversity. They are

age-appropriate, provide challenge and therefore, children develop their skills, are stimulated and interested in what is available.

Children's safety is well promoted. Suitable care practices and procedures are in place that ensures day-to-day safety is monitored and maintained. Children are well protected from the risks of accidental injury, as staff take positive steps to plan for emergencies, prevent and manage accidents. For example, through the use of daily safety checks and a range of risk assessments which are regularly reviewed. Staff involve children in regular fire drills and explain road safety issues as they go on walks and outings. This helps children develop an awareness of their own personal safety. Effective security practices are in place, which actively contribute to keeping children safe and free from harm. For example, the arrangements for the arrival and departure of children and their parents are extremely well managed as staff effectively make use of the closed circuit television (CCTV) system. Children are never left alone with people who have not been vetted or released to unauthorised adults, therefore, they remain secure within the setting.

A comprehensive written child protection policy in line with the, 'Local Safeguarding Children Board' guidance is in place, which is made readily available to parents. Staff have a good knowledge of child protection issues and reporting procedures and have attended additional training to update their knowledge and skills. They are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and fully recognise their duty to protect the children in their care, therefore, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the setting. They are confident, independent and are developing their self-esteem. They receive lots of support and encouragement from staff, therefore, children feel good about themselves. They are cared for by keen and motivated staff, who know children well and give them lots of individual attention, therefore, children feel secure, welcomed and valued. Children are able to approach staff with ease and form close, trusting relationships with their key worker. Children ask questions and respond to exciting new challenges by questioning and using their initiative. Children have their needs met, and staff are innovative in engaging children's attention by using first-hand life experiences, for example, by discussing what foods children choose to eat when they go to a restaurant, to extend their learning and understanding of healthy eating.

Younger children's overall development is supported as staff have a clear understanding of how children learn. Staff are effectively implementing the 'Birth to three matters' framework and they provide a range of stimulating activities and spontaneous experiences to spark children's imagination. Baseline assessments are made to identify children's starting points and methods regarding observation, assessment and planning for children's individual development continue to be developed. Consequently, staff are able to build on what children are interested in, or need to do next to enhance their development.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have clear knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They are aware of how children learn through the stepping stones, what the areas of learning include and provide a range of exciting, innovative and inspiring activities. Strategies for the assessment and planning of the curriculum are developed to provide sufficient challenge,

focus and purpose to encourage individual children's sustained independent learning. However, sometimes planning is not sufficiently cohesive and there are lost opportunities to maximise the learning outcomes for children, during some of the focused activities. For example, insufficient exploration of the uses, including tastes of winter vegetables, and the minimal arrangements for developing children's further understanding of 'the optician' in a role play setting. Children are able to generally extend their learning because activities are built on staff's observations of what children need to do next. Staff are enthusiastic and invite children to think and predict for themselves during activities, such as story-time and general conversations. Children have good opportunities to self-select toys and equipment, therefore, there is an excellent balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities with staff providing close support and encouragement. Consequently children develop their self-esteem, confidence and extend their learning.

Children are confident in large or small group activities, such as circle time and happily sing familiar songs. They listen well when staff are speaking and confidently answer any questions. Children are interested in their play and enjoy their time at the setting. They form good relationships with their peers and play well together. For example, when pretending to 'make a cake' and 'taking a doll for a walk' in the role play area. Through effective organisation of resources and time, children have independent access to all activities and can make choices and decisions about their play. Staff manage children's behaviour appropriately, so that they begin to understand what is acceptable and how their behaviour affects others. Staff are polite when talking to each other or to the children, they always say 'please' and 'thank you' and expect children to do the same in return. Mealtimes are effectively managed to promote a positive social environment and to encourage older children's independence. Children usually have the opportunity to serve themselves, to make choices about what items or how much food they wish to take. Staff always sit with children and partake of the same meal. Therefore, social interaction, lively dialogue and good peer role models are fostered. Children work co-operatively with each other as they take turns, share and help to tidy away the toys when they hear and recognise the 'tidy-away-time' music, which gives them a sense of responsibility.

Children's mark making skills are fostered with a variety of materials available on a daily basis. For example, children use paintbrushes at the easel, pencils, crayons and trace letters or numbers on the wall displays or in the texture troughs with their fingers. Children enjoy listening to stories and respond well to questions as they confidently predict what might happen next. For example, in a familiar story about 'Smudge', knowing that the grey cloud indicates it was going to rain. They have many opportunities to recognise and write their name, for example, children select their name cards when they arrive at the beginning of the sessions and include their name on their artwork. They sound out letters of the alphabet and link these with the sound of the first letter of their name. Many labels are placed around the play rooms, on furniture and equipment and the good range of books and wall displays help children to recognise that words and text have meaning.

Children's mathematical development is encouraged on a daily basis. They are able to count confidently up to 10 and learn to count further. For example, by counting the number of children present in the group and when they form a line to go outside to play. They compare, sort and calculate as they use jigsaw puzzles, sing rhymes and see numbers in their environment. They make comparisons, such as, 'this giraffe is bigger than that little one'. Children calculate simple addition and subtraction as they sing familiar songs and rhymes. Children enjoy investigating their environment as they learn about shapes, how things grow and change. They talk extensively to consolidate their learning, revisiting aspects of their learning, for example, through topics, such as 'healthy eating' and 'all about me'. Children are encouraged to listen and notice different

features of their environment, for example, warm clothes for winter time. Children have good opportunities to develop their information, communication and technology skills as they enjoy using programmable toys and the computer, learning to operate the mouse and keyboard with skill and precision.

Children develop their physical skills and their creativity through the use of a range of art materials and tools as they paint, crayon, create collage pictures, model with play dough and explore tactile experiences such as cereals in the texture troughs. Children use their imagination well to express their ideas and feelings in play situations re-enacting familiar life events, for example, as they pretend to 'go shopping'. The setting embraces opportunities to encourage children to value and learn about the wider community and they have access to a range of toys and resources that reflect diversity. This includes the celebration of some multicultural festivals, for example, Diwali, Christmas and the Islamic New Year. Children begin to understand where they belong and fit into their families, for example, children talk about visiting Grandma and the arrival of a new baby in the family. Children develop a sense of time and place as they talk about their birthday 'today' and the party 'next week'. Children listen to taped music and explore interesting percussion instruments, as they sing familiar nursery songs in group situations. They listen intently to different sounds and compare pitch, tone and rhythm when using the musical instruments. They recognise the signs and names of crotchets and quavers and understand the different timings that are associated with these musical notes. Children are captivated, clapping their hands or using bells, drums and maracas in times with the rhythm.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and relaxed in the setting. Staff promote equality of opportunity and ensure children feel a sense of belonging as they are sensitively supported including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Therefore, children are fully involved, settle well, become more confident, learn and progress. Staff liaise closely with parents and seek advice and guidance from outside agencies so that children feel valued and their needs are met effectively. Children have access to resources, play opportunities and activities which reflect diversity and positively acknowledge differences. For example, through the celebration of some multicultural festivals and access to dolls, dressing up clothes, books and puzzles, that are used to help children broaden their understanding of the wider world.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children behave well in the setting, they happily share their toys, for example, taking turns willingly as they use the computer or play in the home corner. Staff manage children's behaviour effectively in a positive way by listening to them, diverting their attention, praising and rewarding their achievements. They are skilled in knowing when to become involved in children's negotiations and when to hold back so the children can resolve issues for themselves. They are calm, consistent and sensitive in their approach and give clear explanations to children which helps them feel secure and know what is expected of them. Consequently, children behave well and harmony and co-operation is promoted. Children's self-esteem is thoroughly promoted by praise and encouragement from staff. Children's artwork is valued and displayed creatively around the play rooms to further enhance children's sense of belonging.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. They speak favourably of the welcoming environment which helps them to feel confident in the care offered to their children. They feel well informed. A full range of the setting's policy and procedural documentation is readily available for parents and carers. A record of complaints is maintained. Staff are frequently

taking steps to build positive relationships with parents and carers, sending out newsletters and arranging open evenings. Parents have access to information about the, 'Birth to three matters' framework and the curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Information is shared informally through ongoing dialogue, diaries and is displayed on the parents' notice boards. However, the setting is less successful in obtaining the regular views of parents or encouraging them to contribute more fully to their child's learning and development. Folders of children's work and a profile of children's progress and development regarding the learning outcomes are provided for parents to see upon request. Appropriate information is gathered at the time a child is placed in the setting. Information is constantly reviewed to ensure continuity of care, so that children's care and learning needs are met.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled. They are challenged, have fun and effective use is made of space, time and resources to provide a positive environment for children to play and learn. The setting operates a key worker system for all children, so that they receive a good level of support and care from keen and motivated staff. Staff hold various childcare qualifications and are very experienced. They continue to develop their knowledge and skills through regular training, for example, first aid, Early Years Foundation Stage and child protection. Rigorous steps regarding interviewing and selection are taken at the time of employment to ensure staff are suitable and an induction programme is well established. However, although ongoing competency is evaluated as part of the setting's appraisal system, the setting does not have a formal approach to regularly assess any changes with regard to staff's ongoing suitability to work with children. The staff know children well and show care and concern for their welfare, this gives children a real sense of security and well-being and contributes positively to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and the ability to take an active part in the setting.

Policy and procedural documentation is clear, comprehensive and used effectively to support the running of the setting and the promotion of children's health, safety, welfare and enjoyment. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the policies and fully acknowledge their responsibilities to ensure the requirements of the National Standards are met.

The leadership and management regarding nursery education is good. Staff are familiar with the, Birth to three matters framework and six areas of learning. They are clearly aware of their roles and responsibilities and share good practice. They regularly evaluate the service they provide to children and their families and embrace ongoing training opportunities and share information through their team and management meetings. Systems regarding the recruitment, selection, induction and appraisal of staff are effective. They support, appraise and monitor the competency of staff and identify their training needs. The setting is focused on the development and achievement of all children and careful planning takes place regarding children's activities to ensure they have breadth and balance. Therefore, children are nurtured and experience a wide range of exciting and innovative learning opportunities.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to develop systems to ensure that staff keep up-to-date and implement changes arising from new developments in early years. They also agreed to ensure each room is always maintained at an adequate and comfortable temperature.

The setting has taken positive steps to address both issues. A range of in-house and external training courses had been attended by staff members this includes staff working towards NVQ Level 3 & 4 and Early Years Foundation Stage training. Systems have been implemented to check and record ambient temperatures at various times throughout the day to ensure this is adequate and appropriate to promote children's welfare

Complaints since the last inspection

On 17 May 2007, Ofsted received concerns about how the setting were recording and dealing with child accidents, how they were meeting dietary requirements in relation to allergies and how parental concerns were dealt with. These concerns related to National Standard 7: Health, 8: Food and drink, and 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. On 24 May 2007, Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to investigate these concerns and found that the provider was meeting the National Standards. A recommendation was raised to improve the service offered under National Standard 12, requesting that the provider improved partnership with parents by ensuring appropriate information from complaints is shared with parents upon request. The complaints records show that the provider has responded to each of the complaints. The provider continues to remain qualified for registration.

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):

- devise systems whereby parents may contribute more fully to their child's learning and development
- devise and implement a rigorous system to assess staff's ongoing suitability to look after or have unsupervised access to children.

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):

- revise planning and evaluate activities to ensure the maximum learning opportunities are created for children to enhanced their development.

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