

# Keepers Cottage Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY280321
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Anna Davies
<b>Setting Address</b>	Luffenham Road, Ketton, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 3UT
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<b>Registered person</b>	Climbing High Nurseries Limited
<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?

Keepers Cottage Day Nursery is one of three privately owned provisions. It has been registered since January 2004. It operates from a converted bungalow, located in a rural setting on the edge of the village of Ketton, near to Oakham and Stamford. The premises consist of an office, kitchen, toilet facilities and playrooms. A maximum of 60 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday throughout the year from 07.45 to 18.15, with the exception of bank holidays. Children are grouped according to their ages and stages of development and are able to attend for a variety of sessions or full days. There are enclosed gardens and areas for outdoor play and activities.

There are currently 86 children aged from birth to under five years on roll. Of these, 30 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 18 members of staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted by the excellent use of the extensive outdoor areas and gardens at the nursery. Children have daily opportunities to use these areas which are well-resourced to develop physical skills such as climbing, sliding, running, constructing and digging. Separate areas for different ages of children ensure that all children have lots of fresh air and exercise as they enjoy the nursery's rural location. Children benefit because all staff have a positive attitude and appreciation of the part that fresh air and exercise plays in promoting children's good health. For example, staff put on their own Wellington boots and actively join in children's games and support them for example as they practise their balance and coordination on equipment. Further opportunities inside such as climbing on soft shapes, ring games, music and movement sessions and parachute games, also promote children's physical development. Small motor skills and hand and eye coordination are developing as older children ably use scissors to cut out favourite pictures from a catalogue and all children use appropriate cutlery to eat their lunch.

Children are cared for in a clean environment where most are beginning to learn good hygiene routines such as washing their hands before eating and after playing outside. However, this is not consistent practice across the nursery. For example, some younger children do not routinely wash their hands before eating snacks or meals which does not encourage them to develop good habits from a young age. Nappy changing procedures are effective in preventing the risk of cross-contamination. Clear and effective systems and documentation are in place to support children in the event that they have an accident or become ill and all staff have first aid qualifications or are booked on courses in the near future. This helps to ensure that children are well cared for if they have an accident.

Children are offered a balanced range of meals and snacks which meet their individual requirements, for example, taking account of allergies and consistency preferences. At mealtimes children sit at tables or in high chairs together which means that these are social occasions. However, the way that snacks are served to younger children is not so well organised. For example, babies are expected to sit on a plastic mat for snack time and food items are placed directly onto this mat. As a result, children crawl back and forth over the items in their shoes whilst continuing to eat. This does not promote good hygiene or eating routines for younger children. There are good systems in place in all rooms to ensure that children have access to fresh drinking water at all times. For example, individual cups are well labelled to ensure that it is a hygienic system. Older children are developing an awareness of their health and body through topic work about their senses, talking about the care of their teeth and looking at how their muscles warm up and cool down during 'Sticky Kids' music and movement sessions.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and child centred environment, in separate groups and areas according to their age and stage of development. Space is generally well used to provide

children with areas to play, rest and sleep according to their preferences and needs. Particularly good use is made of the outdoor facilities and much thought has gone into ensuring that these areas are safe, secure and well-maintained for each age group. For example, children enjoy nature walks in the adjoining farmers field and access this area through a gate which is kept padlocked when not in use to prevent children leaving unsupervised. Children use a good range of toys and equipment that are suitable and safe for use. Regular checks carried out ensure children's safety when using them. Arrangements for sleeping are good. For example, babies sleep in travel cots in a separate darkened room, whilst older children have individual sleep mats. All children have their own bedding which is regularly laundered and children are monitored as they sleep which ensures their safety at this time.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place. However, these are not always effective in identifying all potential hazards to children. For example, blind cords within reach of children and a trailing wire from a music system were identified at inspection. Although when pointed out, these were immediately rectified by staff, risk assessments had not identified them as potential hazards. Children are protected whilst at the nursery by tight security. For example, there are safe collection procedures, a record of all visitors is maintained and the premises are secure with digital codes required to access areas where children play. Children are learning to keep themselves safe in the event of a fire as there are clear evacuation procedures for each age group and these are practised regularly. Staff make good use of spontaneous opportunities to encourage children to keep safe, for example, by using resources sensibly and considering what consequences their actions may have on others safety. A wide range of policies are adopted by the setting to further promote children's safety such as the consumption of hot drinks, outing procedures and emergency guidelines.

Children's welfare is well safeguarded because all staff and management have a good understanding of their responsibilities towards protecting the children in their care. The setting is proactive in ensuring that all staff receive training in this area so that they have a thorough understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the procedures to follow in the event of concerns. All documentation is in place to support staff in safeguarding children and a written policy is shared with parents so that they are aware of the settings duty towards the children in their care.

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

The provision is good.

All children are cared for in groups according to their age and stage of development. This ensures that the activities, resources and equipment provided for them is suitable, thus meeting their needs and enhancing their enjoyment. Staff effectively support young babies, helping them to investigate and explore their environment. For example, they help them to throw and catch balls, touch and feel different textures as they take part in collage activities and listen to different sounds as they shake bottles containing different materials. Many different types of heuristic play activities such as metal, fabric and wooden objects, further encourage children to explore and investigate. Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this knowledge to provide a good range of activities that are stimulating and meaningful to children, encouraging them to learn. For example, emphasis is placed on investigative play, for example in mushy peas, jelly or paint. Children freely explore these materials, demonstrating their creativity as they watch the foot and hand prints they create when painting. Staff support these activities well, encouraging more reluctant children to participate and challenging more confident children for example, by asking what the paint feels like. Regular observations are made on children and this information is used to influence the

planning which ensures that activities are meaningful for the children and encourage them to make progress in their learning and development.

Available space is generally well used by the younger children and systems to enable children to self-select resources are more established in some groups of younger children than others. For example, children aged between two and three years of age have free access to three areas which contain many opportunities for independent access to resources, role play equipment, table and floor activities. Staff spend most of their time with the children, supporting their play and helping children to develop their ideas. They use opportunities to extend children's learning. For example, they encourage children to talk about and discuss which toy animals they are playing with in the farm set and promote discussion of animals features such as the ram's horns and the name used for a baby cow. As a result, children are confident, happily play alongside each other and most are developing their independence as they make choices in their play. Excellent use is made of outdoor learning opportunities which further enhances children's enjoyment and provides further stimulating activities for children to ensure that they enjoy their time at nursery.

#### Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The pre-school room supervisor is very experienced in delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum and other staff are supported well to ensure that they have a good understanding of the planning and assessment systems and the way that young children learn. Long term plans include topics to be covered over the course of a year. Medium term plans highlight the stepping stones that will be covered during a given month. However, these are not cross referenced to the weekly activities to ensure that they are all covered. Plans show a good range of activities covering all areas of learning and some differentiation is considered to take into account some individual needs. Regular observations are made on children and progress towards the early learning goals is demonstrated in their assessment records. However, activities and their learning intentions are not influenced by children's individual next steps of learning which does not completely ensure that activities build upon their existing knowledge and skills. Good use is made of available space both inside and outside and both environments are well-organised to provide rich learning opportunities. Staff make excellent use of spontaneous learning opportunities and take the lead from children's interests. For example, a fallen branch in the garden provides opportunities for children to problem solve, build working relationships with each other and to develop their communication skills. Staff support activities well, generally providing good questioning and discussion opportunities to challenge the thinking of older and more able children. Group times are well-managed and as a result, all children are engaged and attentive. For example, story times are animated, well read and allow children many opportunities to participate and contribute their ideas. Staff are skilled at managing older children's behaviour. Staff have clear and age-appropriate expectations of the children such as not running inside and speaking without shouting. This ensures that children understand what is expected of them.

Children display positive dispositions and attitudes towards their learning. For example, they are very attentive at group times, confidently initiate conversation with visitors and each other and show perseverance as they attempt to put their coats on correctly. They are beginning to understand the needs of others as they take care of 'Nemo' and 'Splash', their pet goldfish and decide to put crumbs on the bird table for their resident robin.

Children are given time to contribute their ideas to discussions and are able to express their feelings and needs such as when they are finding a task too difficult. Children whose first

language is not English are sensitively supported through repetition of key words and instructions. Children are learning to connect sounds to letters as they look at the initial letters in their first name. They are beginning to recognise familiar words through effective labelling in the environment. For example, they recognise their names on their place mats, drinks cups and drawers. Children write freely as they make pretend shopping lists and some have opportunities to label their own work.

Children are developing their mathematical skills during practical activities. For example, they use number line puzzles to identify significant numbers in their life such as their age, count when playing games of hide and seek and talk about the number of bedrooms in their houses. Constructing with piles of wood in the garden enables children to begin to understand calculation as they compare the number of logs and height of the piles. Children explore and investigate as they throw fallen leaves in the air to see where they land, plant and watch grow their vegetables and look for buried treasure in the sand. Children are developing very good information technology skills. For example, they have daily use of two nursery computers and all children ably use the mouse to complete educational programmes. Children are beginning to understand about the wider world and develop an appreciation of others cultures and beliefs through topics, meaningful discussions and celebrations of significant festivals.

Children are able to be creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, role play and imaginative play. They enjoy the well-resourced role play area as they create games together for example with dolls. Open ended activities such as play dough, allows children time to freely experiment with ideas. Children listen to musical instruments and are encouraged to listen to and repeat different patterns of sounds that they make. Opportunities to freely paint and express their art ideas, are available every day and children are given time and encouraged to share ideas with others, such as what they think might be for tea and what their favourite sandwiches are.

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

The provision is good.

Staff have good relationships with the children and know them well. They are aware of and respond to, their individual needs, requirements and routines. This ensures that children are treated with equal concern. Staff value children's feelings as they sensitively support them as they wake from their sleep, share in their sense of pride as they show off their new clothes and enable children to have their comfort toys from home if they wish. This ensures that children feel a good sense of self-worth and belonging. Children are developing a good understanding of different cultures and backgrounds as they celebrate festivals such as Divali and enjoy visitors into the setting to share their knowledge and skills about different topics such as traditional Indian dress. A good range of resources reflecting diversity ensures that children receive positive messages about similarities and differences in people.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well cared for in the nursery. Staff work closely with parents and many outside agencies to ensure that they meet the needs of all children. Activities are adapted accordingly to ensure that children are able to work and play alongside their peers which promotes inclusion. A designated member of staff takes the lead in this area, has attended training and offers guidance and support to staff to ensure that children's needs are met. Staff employ consistent behaviour management strategies that are age-appropriate. Clear explanations and reasoning ensure that children understand what is expected of them. As a result, some children independently share resources, ask each other for help and work together to solve problems. Children are praised for their achievements such as

putting their own coat on and staff from other rooms frequently praise children as they walk through the areas. This promotes children's self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents receive and exchange good amounts of information when their children begin at the nursery to ensure that the settling in process is smooth. Notice boards, newsletters and regular parents evenings for older children enable them to keep up to date with nursery activities and children's progress. Daily diaries provide further opportunities for two-way communication between staff and parents to promote consistency of care. Complaints are acknowledged by the setting and recorded appropriately to ensure that they are dealt with efficiently and effectively.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive good amounts of information about the Foundation Stage. For example, open mornings encourage parents to become involved in activities with their children to understand how they benefit children's learning and education. Parents can access written reports about children's progress towards the early learning goals, have regular parents evenings to formally discuss their children's progress and development and have access to their child's assessment records when they wish. The setting is currently looking at further developing ways of involving parents and carers in their children's learning. For example, there is currently no system in place to share children's individual next steps of learning with parents and there are only a few opportunities for parents to contribute what they know about their children on an on-going basis to help staff plan children's next steps. Planning is clearly displayed for parents so that they are aware of the activities offered to their children and requests for topical resources and regular newsletters ensures that parents are kept updated about forthcoming events and activities such as special visitors to the setting.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Robust vetting procedures ensure that children are cared for by a balance of well qualified, experienced and mentally and physically suitable staff. Induction training is thorough to ensure that new staff are made fully aware of the nursery's practices and procedures as quickly as possible and regular appraisals for all staff enable training needs to be identified and key strengths acknowledged.

Children are grouped well. They benefit from the small numbers and limited age ranges within the groups. Staff are deployed effectively both inside and out so that children are well supervised and key worker systems are employed effectively to give children consistency of care. However, the use of available space by the two groups of babies aged between one and two years, is not always used effectively. For example, an area between the two groups of children is only used for meal times and some messy play activities. This is a missed opportunity for children to access and self-select a further range of resources and utilise extra space. The children's days are organised well to ensure that they get a balance of types of activities to support their learning, development and good health. Good systems to enable children to freely access and self-select resources are established in the older children's groups. However, the organisation and presentation of resources in the areas used by groups of children aged between one and two years, is not always stimulating which impacts on children's enjoyment in between the planned activities.

A wealth of written policies and procedures are in place, well-organised and the majority are implemented effectively to promote positive outcomes for children. All required records and documentation are in place and available for inspection. Children and staff's personal records are stored securely which promotes confidentiality. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The nursery is managed well. The management demonstrate a clear vision for the future and have good systems in place to ensure that all staff feel involved in future developments such as the introduction and implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, key staff are given projects to work on in order to move the nursery forwards. The setting works closely with the local authority to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The committed staff team work well together and are proactive in refreshing and updating their knowledge through regular training. As a result, staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and develop which promotes positive outcomes for children. There are good systems in place for monitoring the quality of nursery education provision. For example, the manager, who is experienced in this field, works closely with pre-school staff to discuss and evaluate the planning and assessment systems to ensure that children make good progress in their learning.

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

At the last care and nursery education inspection a similar recommendation was made, asking for the improvement of the organisation of the learning environment to enable children to freely select from a wide range of tools and materials and be able to express themselves imaginatively and creatively during free play activities. Since the last inspection, groups of children and their areas have been reorganised so that there is now a good range of these activities and resources available for most children to freely access. This further promotes their enjoyment. At the last care inspection the provider was also asked to include more detail on children's attendance records. These are now clearly documented with times of arrival and departure which enables ratios to be monitored and effectively maintained. Also, an improvement in the organisation of craft and snack time was recommended in order to promote children's independence. Choices of drink and snack are now routinely offered to children and many art activities which require no end result, allow children's creativity to develop independently.

At the last inspection of nursery education, the provider was asked to develop the planning systems to ensure all areas of learning are covered with particular regard to physical development and show how activities can be differentiated for children's varying abilities. Planning now covers all areas of learning although a further recommendation has been raised to ensure that this is completely effective. Some differentiation is now shown for activities. Children now have excellent opportunities to develop their physical skills through a wide range of activities. Lastly, the provider was asked to extend opportunities for children to write for different purposes during role-play activities. Clipboards, notepads and pencils are now freely available for children to use during role play which encourages children to develop their mark-making skills and emergent writing.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received two complaints relating to National Standard 2: Organisation. On the 4th and 10th October 2004 concerns were raised about the ratios of adults to children being cared for. Ofsted received a response from the provider acknowledging that they had not been meeting the requirements of National Standard 2 on specified dates but



had taken immediate action by employing a new manager and making appropriate contingency arrangements for cover when staff are absent. Ofsted was satisfied that by taking these steps the provider met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed. 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):

- ensure that younger children are consistently encouraged to develop good hygiene practices. This relates to the way snack is served and washing their hands before eating
- develop risk assessment procedures to ensure that they are effective in identifying all potential hazards to children
- review the organisation and use of space and resources for the two groups of children aged between one and two years.

#### **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 system of planning so that the activities and their learning intentions are influenced by children's individual next steps of learning. Ensure that the planned activities link to the identified stepping stones
- continue to develop ways of involving parents in their children's learning. This relates to sharing children's individual next steps of learning and developing further opportunities for parents to share what they know about their children on an on-going basis so that this information can be used by staff when planning children's next steps.

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)