

# South Hills Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	146009
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 December 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Mann
<b>Setting Address</b>	South Hills School, Home Farm Road, Wilton,, SALISBURY, Wiltshire, SP2 8PJ
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<b>Registered person</b>	South Hills School Ltd
<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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

South Hills Nursery School is an independent school, established 11 years ago. It has sole occupancy of converted farm buildings and farm land. There are three enclosed gardens for the children's use, including a large sensory garden. The school serves the local area and surrounding villages. It is situated in a farm setting in rural Wilton near Salisbury.

The school operates from 8.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday and for 51 weeks of the year. It is registered for a maximum of 50 children under eight years. The nursery accepts funded three and four year olds. Children are generally grouped by age. At present, 158 children attend on a variety of days, of whom 68 receive funding for nursery education. There are 24 staff who work regularly with the children. Of these, 12 staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. There are three qualified teachers who work at the school and 11 staff hold a current first aid certificate.

The school caters for children who have English as an additional language and for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is a farm setting so children are able to see and care for the animals. The school receives support from Wiltshire County Council.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's good health is promoted extremely well. All routines and procedures are exceptionally thorough to ensure their physical needs are met completely. Cleaning rotas are in place in each area of the school to ensure that the premises and equipment are clean and hygienic. Children demonstrate an excellent understanding of the need to manage their own personal care. For example, children know to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, to limit the spread of germs. For younger children, nappy changing routines are well planned to ensure that young children are protected from cross infection. Staff wear gloves and aprons to limit the spread of germs.

Children enjoy a wide range of nutritious snacks, such as fruit and vegetables. Throughout the school, children sit together in their class groups to enjoy a highly sociable snack time. Staff are attentive and help children to develop good table manners as they talk together. Children enjoy this time as they chat about what they have done and laugh with one another. Older children take great pleasure from pouring their own drinks and offering around plates of fruit to one another. Excellent procedures are in place to ensure that children's dietary needs are met completely, to ensure their well-being.

All children thrive at the school because they have daily opportunities throughout the year to be outdoors in the fresh air. They develop their physical skills through playing on a wide range of equipment. For example, a group of two year olds enjoy climbing on a climbing frame. Some older children have great fun playing in the school's sensory garden. Two children balance skilfully as they walk around a circular pathway. They navigate their way so that they meet one another on the narrow walkway, deliberately bumping into one another and laughing merrily. Babies and the very young children also go outdoors each day, either on walks or to play outdoors so that they too benefit from fresh air.

Children's physical well-being is significantly enhanced because they have frequent opportunities to enjoy the surrounding farmland. Each day, the children visit the various farm animals who live in the adjacent fields. With excellent supervision, they carry the buckets of feed to the animals to feed them. Children are eager to participate in this, and they enthusiastically stride across the fields. They all talk about the animals by name and they show they have a clear understanding of their needs.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are wholly safe and secure. Staff are exceptionally vigilant in their supervision. They make children's well-being their top priority. Children learn to manage their own risks and learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, children walk to and from the fields in a controlled manner. They take great care to walk along the edge of the farm track, holding hands and listening carefully to instructions that the adults give.

Children enjoy exceptional provision in superb premises. Each class has excellent facilities that are organised very well to meet their needs completely. Children have plenty of space to play, eat and rest. There is a wealth of superb equipment and resources available for each age group of children. It is presented in low level storage so children may choose what they wish to play

with. This enables children to develop their independence and become self assured. Premises and resources are checked thoroughly to ensure they are safe and suitable for children's use. Comprehensive risk assessments are made throughout the school and possible hazards are identified and dealt with.

Children are safe from harm and neglect. Staff have a complete knowledge of procedures and requirements with regard to safeguarding children's welfare. The child protection officer is highly knowledgeable of her role and responsibilities. All staff participate in regular discussion and training to update their knowledge. This element of the provision is underpinned by a robust policy.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children throughout the school are exceptionally happy and settled. They are provided with highly suitable activities which help them develop in all areas of the curriculum. Staff provide exemplary support so that each child's needs are met entirely. Every member of staff demonstrates dedication in their role, and all show great affection for the children who attend. They know each child very well through making frequent observation and assessment on their progress. Learning and development opportunities are planned thoroughly for each part of the school. This ensures that all children benefit from a varied and successful curriculum. This enables children to progress at their own pace, doing activities and topics that they greatly enjoy. This creates an extremely happy and vibrant school where children are eager and excited to learn and develop.

The youngest children flourish in their dedicated three room unit, organised to provide appropriate care and play for the ages and stage of development of the children. Babies enjoy a cosy environment that provides them with plenty of excellent opportunities to play and explore. For example, a young child smiles and gurgles with pleasure as he stands in a baby frame, looking at himself in a low level mirror. In another room, a toddler enjoys the story 'Hurry Santa'. She snuggles into the member of staff as they read the book. Children choose what they would like to play with from low level storage units that they can easily access themselves. This helps them to become independent. All children are exceptionally calm and content.

Children in the Dairy Classes are wholly engrossed in their play. They busily move from activity to activity, and are given superb support from the knowledgeable staff who work with them. They enjoy a variety of child led play and adult planned activities which provide a high quality and balanced curriculum. For example, a child uses glue and paint to make a Christmas reindeer picture. He follows the clear instructions given to him by the member of staff to complete the task well and he is obviously delighted with the end product. Elsewhere, a child enjoys free painting with shapes. He dips the shapes in the paint and then enthusiastically bangs them onto the paper to make prints. Children demonstrate extreme self confidence and self assurance as they play happily with one another.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making exceptional progress towards the early learning goals. Comprehensive curriculum planning is led by the individual needs of every child. Accurate observations and excellent assessment records identify the next steps of learning and development for each child. These are incorporated into the planning to ensure every child accesses a curriculum that is tailor made for their own needs and interests.

These objectives are presented in a variety of inviting ways; children initiate some play themselves, and follow the adult's lead at other times. This creates a vibrant and exciting learning environment.

The delivery of the planned curriculum is exemplary. Children's experiences are significantly enhanced because of the superb interaction with highly skilled and extremely knowledgeable staff. Children relate exceptionally well to staff and are enthused by their dynamic approach. For example, a group of children go into the loft area with a member of staff to observe birds living there. They are full of expectation and quiet excitement as they creep up the stairs to see them.

Children make rapid progress in all areas of the curriculum. For example, they develop their understanding of mathematical concepts in a variety of fun ways. Children use compare bear figures to count and compare relative size. Two children paint using shaped prints, correctly identifying the geometric shapes they are using. All children demonstrate superb listening skills and show a very high level of comprehension. For example, a group of children are enthralled as a member of staff reads them the story, 'The Jolly Christmas Postman'. They follow the story intently, making relevant and intelligent observations and comments about the story as it progresses.

Children are very curious and show great interest in exploring and understanding. For example, when making collage Christmas puddings, they experiment with how much glue is needed to stick on the 'icing' granules to ensure they are securely fixed. Children are exceptionally interested in their natural environment. Staff encourage this because they are wholly enthusiastic about being outdoors. Children benefit greatly from the rural setting of the school, and the opportunities this presents. For example, children are delighted to find that the puddles have frozen over in the cold weather. They smash the ice with their heels to discover the muddy puddles that lay beneath. They also understand that the animals need to have water to drink. They help to break the ice in troughs and the duck pond under careful supervision to ensure their safety.

Children's learning is enhanced by an abundance of additional activities and visitors. For example, children throughout the school enjoy weekly music sessions with a visiting teacher. Children aged three and four years old learn songs and how to play musical instrument in a controlled fashion. They also enjoy the drama element to these sessions, acting out simple stories and rhymes. These children demonstrate a high level of confidence and ability, as well as enjoying the music immensely.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children demonstrate an exceptionally strong sense of belonging to the school. They are encouraged to actively contribute to the day-to-day life of the school. For example, when the school's sensory garden was recently completed, children were fully involved in designing and planning the area so that it met their needs and expectations. Children are helpful to one another and demonstrate extremely good relationships with each other. Staff provide exemplary role models for children to follow. They are patient and kind, and appreciative of children's views and efforts.

The school has a clearly defined ethos that is wholly inclusive in practice. Well designed policies on equal opportunities, disability and race equality provide clear objectives for practice that

are implemented completely throughout the school. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through using resources that reflect a diverse society. This is superbly enhanced by excellent learning opportunities about their own and other religious and cultural celebrations that are wholly relevant to their understanding. For example, when learning about the Christmas story, children consider the gifts presented to Jesus by the three Kings. They make comparisons of this to their own experiences of giving gifts to babies. In order to further children's experiences and understanding, the school arranges special days to focus on areas of the curriculum. On occasion, a group of Tibetan Monks visit the school to share music and dance with all the children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given excellent support to enable them to progress very well. The special educational needs coordinator is highly knowledgeable of her role. She is supported well by other staff. She meets with outside agencies and works closely with parents to provide children with a completely consistent approach. All liaise efficiently to ensure that children who require additional help receive an excellent standard of care and education.

Children manage their own behaviour exceptionally well. They are calm and busy in this vibrant school. Staff ensure that children understand how they are expected to behave through clear explanation and superb role modelling. Children are praised highly for kindness, effort and achievement and this helps to promote positive behaviour further.

Children benefit greatly from the superb relationship that exist between their parents and the school. Parents are informed in detail about their child's well-being each day in a variety of ways. This enables parents and staff to have a coherent picture of what each child has done that day. When a child starts at the school, staff spend time talking with parents to ensure they fully understand how best to meet the child's needs. Parents are also given an excellent prospectus which provides useful information about routines and curriculum to inform and reassure them. Parents take an active part in school life through the home/school association. Through this, they participate in fund raising and social activities. These benefit the children and the school, as well as providing opportunities for parents to meet with one another, and with staff. Weekly coffee mornings also provide opportunities for this.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents are fully involved in their child's education. They are given a wealth of information about the curriculum through newsletters and displays within the school. They are invited to attend workshops about different aspects of how children learn and develop, such as learning through play and using the outdoor environment. Parents are invited to parents' evenings to discuss their child's progress, and staff are available at any time to discuss this with them. Children's learning is enhanced significantly because parents are able to extend their learning at home. Staff discuss children's planned next steps with them, and provide ideas of how parents can assist the learning process.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children thrive because of the exceptional organisation of the school. The whole provision is underpinned by a vast range of well written policies and procedures. These are reviewed and updated regularly to keep in line with changes in legislation and development. They are implemented with great consistency throughout the school to ensure children benefit from a consistently high standard of care and education. All documentation is accurately maintained to provide comprehensive records.

Children's experiences are enhanced because staff are well trained in their roles. Many staff hold a relevant teaching or early years qualification. Furthermore, frequent training is given high priority and all staff regularly attend a wide range of courses and workshops to further their knowledge.

Senior staff at the nursery constantly review and evaluate the provision to plan future development. The school development plan clearly sets out intended improvement. Such changes are then successfully implemented and evaluated to ensure children continue to receive the highest standard of care and education.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior staff monitor the Foundation Stage curriculum to ensure it enables all children to make excellent progress. Staff are very well managed to enable them to perform their roles well. For example, besides annual appraisals, staff have regular supervision meetings where they discuss personal development. Regular staff meetings enable all to communicate effectively. This produces an exceptionally strong team who work very well together and who are highly effective in their roles. Overall, the provision meets the needs for the children for whom it provides.

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

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to consider several recommendations in the provision of care and education. They were asked to revise the complaints procedure to include details of how parents may contact Ofsted if they wish to do so. The complaints procedure has been updated and is displayed so any parent wishing to contact Ofsted is able to do so. Also, the visitors book has been amended to require visitors to note their time of arrival and departure in order to provide an accurate record of when they are on the premises.

With regard to the provision of nursery education, the school was asked to provide a balance between child led and teacher directed activities. This has been fully addressed. Children choose activities and resources to use independently as well as enjoying adult planned tasks. In addition, staff tailor the curriculum to meet children's individual interests and to provide multiple practical opportunities to explore and investigate on a daily basis. They were also asked to include more practical activities for children to develop their mathematical understanding. Children now learn about number and shape in a variety of play-based ways that they enjoy.

### **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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

## WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)