

St Hugh of Lincoln Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134467
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Inspector	Jan Leo
Setting Address	Our Lady of Lourdes School, Curbridge Road, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 5JZ
Telephone number	01993 706636
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Registered person	The Trustees of St Hugh of Lincoln Nursery School
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?

St Hugh of Lincoln Nursery school opened in 1995. It is run by a management group of Trustees and it operates from its own building within the grounds of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School in Witney. There are currently 42 children from two and a half to five years on roll. This includes 33 children who receive funding for early education. The group serves the local area and children attend for a variety of sessions on a full or part time basis.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08:30 until 11:30 and 12:30 until 15:00, with a lunch time session for those who wish to extend their day.

There are seven staff working with the children, of whom four have early years qualifications to level 2 or 3. The setting has a firm partnership with the primary school, and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children thrive because they build close bonds with their key workers, have free access to fresh air and exercise, and eat nutritious snacks to sustain them throughout the day. All receive a friendly welcome on arrival and have time to talk to staff before choosing what to do. The children play in a very clean environment and learn about good hygiene from an early age. For example, they wash their hands regularly, taking full advantage of the wonderful washroom facilities designed to promote independence. The children eat their snack at a designated 'café table', with fresh and dried fruits on offer to suit different tastes. The children bring a packed lunch from home, if they stay to lunch, and staff seat children with great care to ensure those with allergies have no exposure to unsuitable foods. All staff have first aid certificates to ensure children receive prompt treatment for injuries, and first aid supplies are generally up to date to keep wounds free from germs. The children learn how to meet their own needs by, for example, donning their warm outdoor clothes before going out to play. They have a large outdoor area to run about in and all make good use of the space, taking their play outdoors whenever they like.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children consistently learn about safety as they play because all staff supervise children really well. Each member of staff takes responsibility for keeping the environment free from hazards, reminding children to keep cars together to prevent clutter on the floor, or explaining the dangers of rocking on a chair when others walk close by. The staff give extremely clear explanations to develop children's understanding of safety and instil good practice for later life. There are no formal risk assessments to support staff in monitoring safety consistently. The children have access to a very wide range of stimulating resources to enhance their play. Staff encourage children to access equipment by themselves and trust them to use resources sensibly to avoid injury. Any who forgets good practice receives a gentle reminder of how to prevent accidents, and swiftly resumes safe play. The entry to the setting is secure, with visitors reporting to the school office to be announced, high handles on exit doors to prevent children escaping, and an alarm used at times when the office is un-staffed. The staff record the number of children and adults present on a board to aid emergency evacuation and keep three registers to note children's attendance whether it be for the morning, afternoon, lunch period, or any combination of these sessions. The staff do not record accurate times of arrival and departure in these registers to show when their responsibility starts and ends for each child. All staff know how to evacuate the children in an emergency and they hold fire drills every term to put the theory into practice. However, some children and staff attend on a part time basis and miss the practises. The staff have a good understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children from harm and know the internal procedure for dealing with concerns. The child protection policy is out of date and some staff are unclear about how to make a referral without seeking advice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The children choose what to do from a wide selection of activities to suit all interests and abilities. The staff prepare the room before children arrive in order to stimulate ideas and make

full use of time. The children rapidly link with friends and create their own games very successfully, taking advantage of low storage trolleys to access additional equipment and extend their ideas. For example, some play with cars building a road layout around other activities, while another makes a model that puffs out air when squeezed. The staff tirelessly promote independence and develop child initiated play to make children confident and enthusiastic learners. The children concentrate for lengthy periods and keep themselves productively occupied throughout the session. All play exceptionally well together and thoroughly enjoy their day.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff observe what children do and routinely develop their interests to include other areas of learning and help them make sense of things. For example, when some don helmets and ear protectors to 'mend' the cars in the outdoor area, staff ask where the number plate is and suggest children make one. The children eagerly jump into action, practising their writing and mathematical skills and deciding how to attach the sign onto their vehicle as a problem solving exercise. The staff interact effectively as children play, developing conversations about flat tyres and foot pumps to bring in relevant experiences to broaden children's knowledge. The staff evaluate the activities and monitor what children do to ensure all get a balanced range of opportunities to develop their skills. The key workers get to know their children well in order to plan for their next steps, but much of their expertise goes unrecorded, making it difficult to sustain appropriate activities if staff are absent. Almost all of the learning is through child-initiated play and, as a result, the children are extremely enthusiastic about everything they do. They listen intently to others and play very well together. All are very sociable with some offering gifts to visitors, carefully named so as not to be forgotten. The children routinely practise their mark making skills both indoors and out, successfully selecting the best tools for the job in hand. The children have free access to books and some sit with friends for lengthy periods, turning pages slowly as they discuss what they see. 'Oh I'm having great fun here' said one, racing toy cars with his peers. 'Do you want to have a go?' he asked, drawing others into his game. The children are pleased with their achievements whether it is their success at building the car track around someone's 'wellies', or joking with the group by saying 'a baby giraffe is called a horse'. All enjoy the laughter that follows, demonstrating the fun they have while they play and learn. The children use what they know in a relaxed manner, working independently through computer programs or counting how many cars they have. Most children are skilled at problem solving by, for example, successfully selecting the right shaped pieces to take wooden blocks around a corner. The children have a firm sense of belonging and freely give advice to staff about, for example, why they should not leave the tap running, saying, 'we mustn't waste water because some children don't have enough'. The children show confidence and competence in everything they do. They know the routine well and comply fully with expectations. The children are independent and sociable, and are making good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The key worker system works extremely well at this setting and, as a result, the children settle quickly, make very good friendships with their peers and feel fully included in all aspects of the day. The staff respect what children say and promote their independence to raise self-esteem. All children develop a caring attitude and learn to value others. The staff are dedicated to helping each child reach their potential whether they are exceptionally advanced or struggling to overcome developmental hurdles. They rapidly assess children's needs when they start at

the provision and make sure children get the support they need to make good progress. The staff promote good behaviour by acting as extremely good role models for children to follow. They welcome children enthusiastically when they arrive, address children by name when talking to them and crouch down to make eye contact as a means of assessing children's understanding. As a result, all children feel important and develop a strong sense of community. They show affection by kissing their friends and behave really well. The partnership with parents and carers is good. All who comment on the service praise it highly. They receive valuable information about how the setting operates, with essential information on display in the entrance. The staff make themselves freely available to discuss children's progress at drop off and collection times and they hold parents evenings to discuss children's development in more detail. Families can see their children's records at any time but the current record system makes it difficult for parents to see the rate of their children's progress. Adults receive regular newsletters to keep them up to date with current topic work and items of interest, and are welcome to watch their children 'at work' to see first hand what they do. Whilst the staff have well thought through procedures for almost every aspect of daily practice, the management has not reviewed the policies since 2003. Consequently, some do not hold up to date information to support what staff do and ensure consistency if staff are absent. The nursery has very strong links with the school and works closely with the Head and parents to assess the best time for children to make the transition to school, always putting the needs of the child first. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. There have been staff and building changes since the last inspection and the settling in process is not yet complete. The staff prioritise the improvements making sure daily practice is effective in meeting children's individual needs and, as a result, the children benefit from a stimulating and varied day. They follow good practice regarding health and safety, and learn how to socialise and show consideration towards others. The staff form a very effective team and consistently support children to ensure they develop and learn effortlessly. All members of staff take responsibility for supervising children closely, developing the activities and ensuring play remains safe. The daily leadership and management of the provision are good, with the children's welfare and development being the staff's main concern. The staff tirelessly review what they do to ensure practice remains effective and they work closely to implement improvements and raise standards. The manager is exceptionally well organised and is methodically working through all documentation to introduce order and raise the value of the paperwork to support the staff in their daily work. To date, the management committee have provided little input resulting in the review of documentation being a mammoth task with very slow progress. Currently, the paperwork does not contain all the necessary detail to back up the staff and ensure consistency if the staff group changes. The committee is very willing to become more involved in the setting to relieve some of the burden from the manager, but at present, there are no formal procedures for monitoring and reviewing policy.

Improvements since the last inspection

There was one recommendation made at the last care inspection and two made at the last nursery education inspection. The setting was asked to obtain written consent to seek emergency medical treatment for children if necessary, develop independent use of books, and build on opportunities for parents and carers to share information about their children's progress.

The setting now routinely obtains permission for emergency medical treatment when the children start at the nursery to avoid delay in any relieving their discomfort. They have created a reading area with easily accessed storage for books, and a place where children can sit to read. This is now a popular area where children freely spend their time enjoying books alone or with friends. The nursery now operates a key worker system to ensure staff get to know all children and their parents well. Parents and carers feel able to speak to staff at any time and confirm that staff take prompt action to address any issues that they raise. Parents and carers can also record their comment on their children's reports in order to contribute further towards their children's progress.

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.

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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):

- improve safety by updating staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection, formalising risk assessments for all aspects of the provision, and ensuring all staff and children practise fire drills regularly
- review all policies to make sure they contain all the necessary detail and up to date information

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):

- make better use of profiles to support staff in recording children's progress, identify gaps in learning, and 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