

# Highfield Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	405361
<b>Inspection date</b>	04 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Adelaide Griffith
<b>Setting Address</b>	3/4 Highfield Rd, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 3ED
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<b>Registered person</b>	Child Base 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 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?

Highfield Day Nursery is one of 35 run by Child Base Nurseries. It opened in 1997 and operates from a large grade 2 listed building. The nursery is situated in Edgbaston on the outskirts of Birmingham. A maximum of 80 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 for 52 weeks of the year except for bank holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 118 children aged from four months to under four years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area, as most of their parents travel in to work in the city centre. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 24 members of staff. Of these, 22 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are clearly learning about personal hygiene as they wash hands independently or with minimal assistance as part of the daily routine. Children are significantly protected from infection due to rigorous procedures including those pertaining to the serving of meals. The kitchen is scrupulously clean and a very high standard is maintained with regard to the preparation, handling and storage of food in accordance with Environmental Health guidelines. A commendable procedure is to record that hot water stored in flasks and used for preparing babies' liquid feeds does not fall below recommended temperatures. This means that they are thoroughly protected against contamination. Owing to detailed policies children's good health is ensured and there are stringent procedures for the administration of medication and in the event of accidents. Parental permission is obtained for seeking emergency medical treatment. All staff hold current first aid qualifications and several first aid boxes are accessible in care rooms.

Children are gaining an accurate understanding of making healthy choices. Balanced meals are cooked with a wide range of fresh vegetables daily. Snacks include fruit and other healthy options prepared on the premises. Children's independence is effectively promoted through a rolling process for accessing snacks. Their understanding of healthy choices is imaginatively promoted through developmentally appropriate discussions about the types of foods being introduced with regard to new flavours and textures. There is a highly efficient system to ensure that children's individual dietary requirements are met. For example, staff check all meals and labels are attached to plates and containers to minimise the likelihood of errors occurring. Children drink throughout the day from individually labelled beakers and bottles of water that are stored within reach.

Younger children crawl around in the room or through tunnels and they play with push along toys. They walk unaided or with adult assistance. Babies sit with support in recliners or doughnut rings. All have opportunities for outside play. Babies and younger children sleep according to their individually established pattern with soothing background music. All children have opportunities to sit quietly for stories or to rest as they wish.

Children receiving early education play in the large garden with a wide range of equipment and they run around freely. Children play with equipment that they push and pull, for example, bikes. They are gaining a defined sense of spatial awareness by riding around in bubble cars. They are effectively learning to develop skills in balancing as they walk around on low stilts and their hand-eye coordination is nurtured through play with large balls which they catch with both hands held closely. Children enjoy play on swings and they are learning to hop confidently on both feet.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming environment which is bright due to an abundance of natural light and cheerful with vast examples of their work. Rooms are spacious and children have ample space to move around. The pre-school facilities are well resourced with imaginative toys and in the baby room a very tranquil atmosphere prevails. All care rooms cater for a wide variety of play experiences and all are provided with a cosy area which is furnished with large

floor cushions and books at a low level. Rooms are vibrant with attractive displays that are tastefully mounted and these contribute superbly to the colourful environment of the nursery. Additionally, two sensory rooms with exciting resources are available.

Outside children access a well-maintained, safe play area. Large play equipment such as swings and climbing frames are firmly secured over a surface of bark chippings. Children play with a vast range of interesting and stimulating toys purchased from reputable suppliers. All equipment including cots, recliners and low chairs are checked at the time of use to ensure that they remain in a good state of repair.

Children are protected due to extensive safety measures such as gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Moreover, there is a robust risk assessment system in place with frequent monitoring of staff's knowledge of health and safety issues. Children's security is given utmost priority due to controlled entry to the premises and close circuit television monitors in care rooms. Children are very efficiently supervised. For instance, before going outside for play and on return indoors the number of children is counted. During sleep periods children are monitored and sleep charts are filled in at frequent intervals. Furthermore, in the baby room staff implement expert practice through the combined use of visual checks and the immediate response to monitors at five minute intervals to ensure that they remain safe at all times.

All mandatory fire precautions are taken and frequent fire drills are carried out to ensure that new children are aware of the procedure. Consequently, all children are gaining a precise understanding of leaving the building in the event of an emergency. A comprehensive policy is in place for outings and children are kept safe due to these procedures.

Children's welfare is substantially ensured due to staff's clear knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. Staff are well informed about their role to protect children and they are strongly aware of maintaining children's safety at all times. There is thorough understanding with regard to procedures for recording and reporting concerns and for dealing with allegations.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have clear understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework which they implement to promote children's learning and development. A broad range of stimulating activities is planned and children's progress is consistently recorded. Staff assess children's learning through observations and identify next steps for their achievement competently.

Staff work with babies and stimulate their language skills through constant interaction. For example, they read stories and sing nursery rhymes. Staff communicate consistently through play activities and whilst babies are fed. Babies benefit from play with a broad range of colourful, sensory toys and they have opportunities to explore items through the provision of treasure baskets. Younger children participate in challenging activities. For instance, discovery bags containing a wide selection of objects are used to stimulate their curiosity effectively and to develop their hand-eye coordination and imaginative play. Their learning is successfully promoted through creative play which involves the innovative use of various materials such as toothpaste and sand for painting. Children's confidence is well promoted due to toys that are stored at their level and they are consistently encouraged to make choices from a vast range of resources. Children's memory skills are developed through repetition and they join in with naming some colours correctly. Their development is fully supported through interesting and enjoyable play opportunities which are planned by enthusiastic staff.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff are highly accomplished in working with the Foundation Stage and this is reflected in the delivery of the curriculum. Planning is based on monthly themes and staff are flexible in their approach to the implementation of these according to children's responses. Challenge is included for children according to their age and ability. For instance, younger children who have not mastered mark making participate in sticking with pictures whilst older children draw recognisable pictures. Entry profiles are completed and observations are carried out frequently to note children's stage of development in order to inform the planning process. Weekly assessments are carried out and a consolidation week is included to check children's actual learning with and adaptations are made as required to achieve the next level in learning. This indicates an alertness to meeting children's needs and staff's ability to identify realistic learning objectives. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have opportunities to bond with keyworkers and the special needs coordinator guides staff with regard to the most appropriate methods to support children's learning.

Staff use a variety of teaching methods to promote children's learning effectively. They listen to children who are encouraged to talk about their bear book. They stimulate language for thinking. For instance, they provide a high level of challenge during a story session when staff ask them to explain what makes a rainbow. For each response offered the adult repeats the answers and questions children for the reasons they have given. Staff prepare children by emphasizing some of the activities planned for the day. They summarise stories expertly and extend children's learning by linking songs to play in the rain outside. There is a balance of child-led and adult-led activities. An illustration of this includes the practice during circle time when children consistently make decisions with regard to developing play. Children's confidence and self-esteem are admirably promoted through this approach. Staff repeatedly use opportunities to promote spontaneous learning, for example, during outside play some staff with a small group of children look up at a helicopter over head and talk about the noise of the propellers.

Children are exposed to new experiences as they learn about the lifecycles of caterpillars and butterflies. Consistently staff extend children's understanding of concepts through related stories, creative work, counting, singing and by encouraging children to express their ideas, for instance about the sound and feel of rain drops. Consequently, children are always learning holistically. Their recognition of numbers from one to eight is visually reinforced as staff write these on the white board in order to link the names with the figures. Additionally, problem solving skills are developed through play as the adult jumps four times in succession and asks children to calculate the number of times left to 'five'. Children are learning within the context of the daily routine. For instance, they hear and say initial sounds as staff pronounce the first letters of some words at story time and when naming the days of the week. Their imaginative skills are given free reign through the use of a sheet which staff have folded to pretend that it is a puddle. They then jump on this for some time with much hilarity and staff join in enthusiastically. Likewise, their recognition skills are well promoted through a game to search for missing shoes that they identify by naming the colours.

Children are well behaved due to the positive strategies such as constant interaction and consistent praise. Children are competently supported in learning what is expected of them as they are requested to replace shoes on their feet as others have done. Children are gaining a clear understanding in exercising self-discipline whilst patiently awaiting their turn during activities. Staff are strong role models for children. For instance, they treat children with respect by listening to their explanations.

Staff work effectively with children for a greater part of the time. They join in with the spirit of activities, for instance, by jumping in response to children's requests. Staff provide an environment which is organised to promote independence. For instance, all resources are stored at a low level with pictures of the contents of drawers and units to enable children to access these as they wish. Staff make exceptional use of the accommodation. Throughout the pre-school rooms children are exposed to numbers, letters, words, photographs and displays that relate to areas of learning and a board is used to celebrate all children's achievements. Their self-belief is significantly enhanced through this practice. Outdoors children play in a large garden to which they contribute through the growing of plants. Moreover, seating and tables are used to deliver aspects of the indoor curriculum outside. Children are exposed to a vast wealth of ideas that stimulate their learning overtly and subliminally and they are making developmentally appropriate progress towards the early learning goals.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly valued and their individual needs are met through the implementation of care routines as agreed with parents. Children are gaining a significant understanding of other cultures through planned activities that include the celebration of festivals. Furthermore, a vast range of resources is provided with specific items for each age group according to their developmental level. For instance, dressing up clothes for pre-school children and books for younger children. Additionally, children are fully supported in developing a positive impression of disability through activities and related resources. They are effectively learning about the wider community through the involvement of services such as the police. Also, they contribute to annual fundraising events which support several charities. Similarly, they are gaining a precise understanding of the environment through exposure to concepts such as recycling through the provision of colour coded bins.

Staff have current experience of working with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are supported by the special needs coordinator who discusses individual needs with parents and inclusion workers in order to devise specific programmes. Staff also liaise with external agencies. Consequently, children's additional needs are met.

Children are well behaved due to the staff's highly skilled management of behaviour with emphasis on positive reinforcement. For instance, children are praised consistently and at times staff are profuse in their acknowledgements to ensure that all children receive an incentive for good behaviour. They are experienced at interacting with children of all age groups and are sensitive to children's behaviour patterns. For example, children have the freedom to change activities when they wish. Staff are excellent role models as they speak to children politely and they maintain a cheerful atmosphere at all times. This approach ensures that younger children respond to staff positively and comply with request, for instance, to remain seated whilst drinking from beakers. Children are effectively learning to share responsibility for their environment as they willingly participate in tidying away. Moreover, older children assist with setting tables and handing out plates at mealtimes. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

With parents there is a commendable relationship based on mutual respect, trust and open communication. All parents receive a professionally produced prospectus of the nursery with details relating to the service provided and the abridged version of policies. An entry profile is completed for all children. For all age groups a parents' board is provided with information about planned activities and the key worker groups so that they are clear about these

arrangements. Additionally, post-it stickers and writing equipment are provided for parents to write notes spontaneously for inclusion in children's development folders to which they have unhindered access. There are firm agreements for the collection of children with the use of a password when required.

There is a comprehensive system in place for the daily exchange of information including written diaries for babies and younger children. Staff maintain confidentiality and share sensitive information verbally. Parents' views are given due consideration informally through discussions and formally through the parents' forum which enables their input towards the provision of the nursery. Interesting newsletters are produced for each room and for the nursery on the whole. Owing to staff's caring attitude and commitment children benefit significantly from the partnership with parents.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. All parents are supplied with written information about the curriculum and plans for activities are displayed. Details of activities are included and all areas of learning are clearly explained with colourful examples of implementation. Moreover, parents receive written notification at the start of activities relating to the planned themes. Parents contribute actively to children's learning through discussions and by writing notes which are included in the development folders to demonstrate learning that is achieved at home. A parents' evening is held every term to inform parents about their child's progress. There is expressed satisfaction about staff's support for children's learning and development which are admirably promoted with particular emphasis on the nurturing of their child's confidence. Children's learning is fully supported through the partnership with parents and carers.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are effectively protected due to the implementation of suitability procedures that ensure that all staff are consistently vetted. Most staff have worked in the nursery for a considerable time and children benefit from continuity of care.

There is exceptional organisation for the care of children with a robust system for deputising. Staff are deployed effectively at all times and adult to child ratios are maintained in all rooms as children are cared for in small groups. Contingency arrangements are very good with cover from supernumerary staff. This means that children's welfare is well maintained due to stringent measures which ensure that they are always supported and cared for by staff whom they know. New staff undergo a comprehensive induction programme and are allocated a mentor to assist their settling-in period.

All staff attend mandatory training in a wide range of courses including manual handling, infant feeding and basic food hygiene. All training is reviewed and updated at regular intervals. Consequently, children's care is enhanced through this forward thinking approach. Moreover, appraisals are carried out twice yearly to support staff in their work. This means that children are cared for by staff who feel valued and are therefore more inclined to reflect this in their practice. Staff work as part of a cohesive team with allocated areas of responsibility for example, health and safety. Visits are arranged for external personnel including the music man and all children participate in music sessions. An annual trip and outings are organised to distant and local venues. There are links with other child care provisions and agencies with regard to sharing aspects of child care practices.

Staff are highly committed. For instance, they have developed the garden for the care and learning of the children. They are very creative and have produced vibrant displays that identify the character of rooms and also serve to share information. They consistently record children's activities through a vast selection of photographs and some are used for making books that demonstrate the effectiveness of children's learning. Consequently, children are fully supported to develop a sense of belonging through the staff's enthusiasm for their work.

Staff meetings are held frequently and the operational plan is updated annually. The self-evaluation form is completed and reviewed at specific intervals and areas for improvement are included and addressed. All required documentation is available. Children's records are stored securely. Staff are clearly aware of the procedures for the retention of records and for notifying Ofsted about significant changes. Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the of the provision, and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children, are maintained.

The leadership and management of funded children is outstanding. The registered person aims to provide excellent learning opportunities and there is a strong desire to provide exceptional standards of care. Senior staff create a comfortable environment and are alert to working relationships. They also support others in working towards their strength. They offer guidance in teaching and help staff to be more productive in order to promote children's learning effectively. They consistently review teaching methods to note areas for improvements. Children's learning benefits consistently due to the capacity for improvement through reflective practice.

The strength of the nursery include a warm, friendly and relaxing atmosphere and a strong team. Staff are clearly aware of their roles and responsibility to protect children and to promote learning and development at all times. The ethos of the nursery focuses on promoting children's independence, self-esteem and social skills. It also includes valuing the staff who reflect this in their attitude towards children and parents. Staff maintain contact with personnel from the local authority and they are competently guided by their own early years coordinator to achieve highly effective teaching methods. Dynamic leadership and management support children's progress towards the early learning goals. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last inspection the provider was asked to make improvements by maintaining a record of visitors on the premises. A record is currently maintained in order to ensure children's security. Additionally, the suggestion to monitor the quality of teaching and learning is addressed consistently in order to promote the children's learning effectively.

### **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)