

Hoole Bank Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305111
Inspection date	03 January 2008
Inspector	Suzette Butcher
Setting Address	Hillcroft, Hoole Bank, Hoole Village, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 4ES
Telephone number	01244 324422
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Registered person	Hoole Bank Day Nursery Limited
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?

Hoole Bank Day Nursery is privately owned and was established in 1997. It is situated in Hoole village on the outskirts of Chester close to the motorway network. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 hours for 51 weeks a year. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 52 children aged from six months to under five years on roll, of these 14 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the local area. The nursery employs nine members of staff, of these seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health needs are protected well with relevant details recorded. Effective health and hygiene procedures are in place and followed by all staff to reduce the risk of cross contamination and infectious diseases. Staff have current paediatric first aid qualifications to enable them to respond promptly to minor injuries. Individual care needs are recorded and met for babies and young children. Babies enjoy close, warm relationships with staff members as they are gently reassured and comforted during personal care routines. Older children develop good independence in all their self help skills as they confidently care for their own toileting needs. They know why it is important to wash their hands thoroughly because good practice is regularly reinforced in lively topics and during every day activities, for example, older children consider the weather and changes in temperatures and they know why they need to put on their hats, gloves and scarves when they play outside in cold weather.

Daily outdoor and indoor play opportunities enable every child to take part in regular physical exercise. This ensures that children have fun as they enjoy a healthy lifestyle and make good progress in their physical development. Children eagerly put on Wellington boots on wet days or wrap up warm in icy weather to benefit from the exciting opportunities in the outdoor play area. Jumping into hoops, balancing on stilts or walking over a wooden bridge encourage children to use their bodies in different ways and gain confidence as they master different skills. Children play happily together in ball games and ride bicycles around as they explore and develop coordination skills with support from adults. Babies investigate different opportunities as they become more mobile and develop confidence when staff encourage their crawling, standing and balancing skills.

Children participate in numerous practical opportunities which increase their understanding of the importance of a healthy diet in a healthy lifestyle. They help to plant seeds in the large vegetable garden and eagerly provide water to help them grow. They have fun experimenting with new tastes and textures when they harvest their produce and enjoy strawberries or raspberries. They proudly gather spinach or radishes to give to the cook to prepare for lunch. Children enjoy regular cooking sessions and prepare dishes, such as sushi or spring rolls, from different cultures. Weekly menus are displayed for parents and a good balance of healthy, nutritious options are available for snacks and meals. Staff and children sit together in a friendly, relaxed social setting at mealtimes. They enjoy each other's company as they chat together about their day. Good manners are promoted and children happily sing a song to remind them of good table manners. Special diets and individual preferences are skilfully catered for and parents' preferences are acknowledged. Children's independence skills are actively promoted throughout the nursery. Babies and toddlers make good progress in their eating and drinking skills as staff offer individual attention and reassuring support at mealtimes. The provision of appropriate cutlery and cups create a smooth progression and enables children to experience success in small achievable steps. Older children confidently choose their own snacks and organise their own dishes and cutlery, for example, they help themselves to fruit and sandwiches and pour out their own drink of milk. Fresh drinking water is freely available for children throughout the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are happy and safe in the cosy, friendly nursery. Rooms are maintained at an adequate temperature although additional heating units are often required in some areas. Security is given a high priority with a central restricted point of entry for parents and visitors.

Comprehensive risks assessments are completed on a regular basis. Staff are vigilant and respond promptly as they quickly assess and minimise potential hazards, such as wet leaves on the path. Fire drills are practised on a regular basis and safe procedures are in place for outings. Children learn about what is dangerous and how to keep themselves safe during imaginative role play activities, such as crossing roads at pelican crossings or visits from a fireman.

Colourful, tactile displays of children's art work, mobiles and low level photographs create an attractive environment where children develop positive self-esteem and a strong sense of belonging. The nursery is well organised to enable older children to move about freely and confidently between areas. Storage facilities ensure that areas are free from clutter and subsequently safe for children. A wide range of good quality toys and resources are stored in low level, labelled units where older children are invited to make their own choices and return items when they have finished. A selection of every day objects and natural materials are available in treasure baskets, role play areas and craft materials to widen children's experiences. The outdoor play area is imaginatively organised to provide a lively focus for a wide range of nursery activities. It is divided into different areas with a soft play surface available for use throughout the year. An adventurous woodland area with bridges, climbing and balancing apparatus and an inviting den amongst the trees provide further stimulating experiences for children.

Children are protected by the staff's good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. Training is regularly updated and procedures are reviewed to meet required criteria. Parents are informed about the staff's responsibility to safeguard all the children in their care and contact details for the Local Safeguarding Children's Board are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy themselves in the friendly nursery where everyone relates well to each other with warm and caring relationships. Good settling in procedures are in place to enable young children and their families to gradually adapt to nursery life, for example, babies who are unsettled are offered extra support and comfort as they gain confidence and learn to relate to key staff members. Babies and toddlers move about freely within their immediate environment and happily explore and investigate the low level resources that are available. They share their attention with staff and other children as they develop a stronger sense of self and interest in others. They have fun building towers of bricks or pressing buttons to activate a sound on a toy as they begin to realise that actions have consequences. Low level mirrors provide practical opportunities to examine their own image and facial features. Times are organised to introduce a range of sensory experiences, such as treasure baskets, playing with shredded paper or painting but these play and learning activities are short lived and not freely available as part of daily routines. This has a negative impact on the developmental progress of babies and young children in the setting.

Most staff have good knowledge and experience of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and activities are based on examples of good practice from this framework. Young children are given time and opportunities to practise and consolidate their learning in a supportive environment. During free play activities, toddlers enjoy snuggling up to an adult to share a picture book or choosing toys from the selection available. They develop confidence and positive self-esteem as they learn to make their own decisions and make their own choices. Children enjoy gathering together for music and movement sessions. They learn about rhyme and language as they sing action rhymes and songs together. However, creative activities are supervised and controlled by staff and do not offer children the wide range of stimulating experiences. This has a negative impact on children's creativity and independent learning. At times, staff organise activities with unrealistic goals and do not appreciate children's individual needs. Systems are in place to observe, assess and evaluate children's play and learning activities. This information is used to inform future planning. Staff are currently in the process of extending the observation and assessment cycle to clearly identify next steps for individual children and focus more on children's interests and preferences .

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff's secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and principles of early learning provide a firm basis and create an environment where children make good progress. Staff complete clear, written observations on individual children's play and learning on a regular basis and this information is successfully used to plan future activities. Children's progress is assessed and recorded and the next steps for individual children clearly identified. This enables staff to build on what children already know and can do as they meet individual children's interests and preferences. Children are actively involved in their own planning when they initiate and develop their own play. They make their own decisions and are given time to explore and apply their own learning. For example, an informal role play game leads to an extended topic on making maps, treasure hunts, exploring and following directions. Planning includes appropriate topics, such as Winter, Under the Sea or Transport, to extend children's experiences and provide a focus for stimulating opportunities. Activities are flexible and adaptable to provide challenging opportunities for older and more able children. This ensures that their interest is maintained and provides opportunities for children to progress at their own pace without getting bored.

Children have a very positive attitude and are strongly motivated to learn. They are keen to learn because they are encouraged to try out new skills as they happily develop independence and self-motivation. Children are often fully absorbed in their play and staff are aware of when it is appropriate to work alongside and extend their learning. Children are very competent communicators as they confidently talk about past experiences and predict future events or chat happily with each other. Staff are skilled in talking and listening to children as they work alongside and politely comment on their activities, provide an explanation to make them think or draw their attention to a positive aspect. Consequently, children feel valued as staff help them to feel good about themselves. Children are offered stimulating opportunities to investigate and explore when, for example, they create rockets together or experiment with natural resources. Children happily take turns on the computer where they confidently complete their programmes or work in a small group with discreet adult support. They learn more about their environment and the natural world when they carefully follow the process of planting seeds and cultivating fruit and vegetables. They learn to care for living beings, such as stick insects or fish. Visitors bring in their animals to share their experiences and the local postman or Mayors visit to increase children's awareness of the wider community.

Children's imagination is developed and extended in role play opportunities where they revisit familiar stories, such as 'Three Billy Goats Gruff'. They happily retell the story to each other and act out the roles with figures from the book. Children experiment with mark making in practical activities when they take an order as a waitress or write an invitation to a party. They enjoy investigating the properties of creative shapes and experimenting with pattern sequences, for example, they confidently create their own 'very long snake' with three dimension shapes. Children create colourful patterns and enjoy using the wide range of writing tools, such as chalk, pens or magnetic boards to practise numbers or write letters. They learn to recognise sounds, letters and words as they find their own names each day. Letters are frequently linked to sounds and daily singing sessions reinforce rhythm and sound patterns. Concepts of number and basic calculations are informally reinforced in practical activities. As they play children confidently count amounts, consider which has the most or calculate how many more as they play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well mannered and considerate towards adults and each other. Respect for others and good manners are strongly promoted throughout the setting. Everyone is valued as an individual and the ethos of mutual respect and support between the staff is reflected in the positive interactions throughout the nursery. Children develop confidence and positive self-esteem as staff comment on the interesting features or attractive quality of their work. They happily share, take turns and help each other to build a model or tidy the toys away. Disagreements are dealt with in a way that is appropriate to each child's age and stage of development, for example, staff redirect or intervene when younger children want the same toy. Older children sensitively consider other people's feelings and learn to recognise different emotions. Staff skilfully encourage children to consider the consequences of their actions and explain that accidents may happen if they run too fast. Babies enjoy warm relationships and relate well to familiar staff. They are reassured with lots of hugs and cuddles as they develop confidence and gradually learn about right and wrong.

Children have fun playing with a wide range of resources and benefit from posters and displays that promote positive images of a diverse society. They explore exciting role play opportunities as they create a dragon and perform a dance to celebrate Chinese New Year. Visits to nearby schools or lively talks from people from different countries further develop children's awareness of cultural differences. Staff have a good understanding of the underlying principles to promote equality of opportunity and work successfully within them. Strong, positive links are fostered with children's own cultures and language and parents are invited to become actively involved within the nursery. This creates a stronger transition between home and nursery. Staff ensure that children with learning difficulties and disabilities are actively involved and their families are warmly welcomed. They recognise the importance of working effectively in partnership with parents and appropriate agencies to support children's development and learning. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents comment on their overall satisfaction with the quality of care and education provided. They write that they are 'made to feel welcome' and describe the environment as 'caring, stimulating and safe' and 'like an extended family'. Baby routines are recorded and reviewed with parents on a regular basis as they adapt and progress in the caring environment. Information is shared on children's diet, sleep routines and play activities in a daily written record to provide good continuity of care for babies. Staff record relevant activities on a notice board each day for older children. Staff and parents chat

informally at handover times and parents are aware that priority will be given to make time for a private discussion if they have any queries or concerns. Parents have an open invitation to share and discuss their child's individual progress file at any time. However, staff do not actively encourage parents to become involved in their child's learning experiences in the nursery or to develop them in their own home. This has a negative impact on children's development. Newsletters and notices inform parents of special events and important information. Parents are invited to participate in special events, such as, sport day or a Christmas play, to further develop a positive partnership.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Management are actively involved within the setting, where they lead by example and provide positive role models for staff and children. They demonstrate a strong commitment to continually improve the quality of care and education that they provide for young children. The manager has recently completed an Early Years Professional Status Qualification, for example. Comprehensive monitoring systems are in place to evaluate the setting's strengths and weaknesses and prioritise targets and areas for improvement. For example, recent improvements to the outdoor play area have successfully increased children's play and learning opportunities. Management share information and identify key actions with the whole staff team in regular staff meetings. Staff communicate well with one another and form a strong, effective team. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and feel valued and involved in the nursery organisation. This creates a happy and supportive atmosphere for children and their families.

Management effectively monitor and evaluate the overall quality of nursery education and encourage staff to regularly reflect on their own teaching and the impact on children's learning. Agreed action is implemented and regularly reviewed to provide a clear pathway towards further improvement.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because all staff are recruited and appointed through good employment procedures. A comprehensive induction and probationary period for new staff promotes a firm basis for future staff development. Annual appraisal systems are in place to provide good quality support and staff development for each individual. Staff attend training courses on a regular basis to enhance their skills. Staffing levels are organised to provide appropriate support for children throughout the day. Records are used effectively to support the care of children. All required policies and procedures are in place to comply with regulations and they are freely available for staff and parents. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and confidentiality is maintained throughout.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the providers agreed to review the organisation of the kitchen and to improve procedures for children's meals and drinks. Consequently, fresh drinking water is always available, snacks and meals are served appropriately and good hygiene procedures are followed for all food preparation. These improvements further promote a healthy lifestyle for children.

The providers also agreed to ensure that the premises are appropriately maintained and that fire safety recommendations are met. The fire drill is held regularly, fire fighting equipment is in place and the premises are maintained to an adequate standard. These changes further protect children.

Further recommendations were made to provide the complaint procedure for parents and to ensure that there is a trained member of staff who has responsibility for child protection issues. Both these issues have been successfully addressed to safeguard children and their families.

At the last nursery education inspection, the providers agreed to improve children's independence at mealtimes, increase children's awareness of the different purposes of writing and develop children's understanding of addition and subtraction. All these aspects of children's learning have been improved to further meet their needs.

A further recommendation was made about the quality of leadership and management within the setting. Systems have been reviewed and management have attended appropriate training to improve the overall quality of leadership and management. This has a positive impact on children's welfare and development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted have received concerns in relation to National Standard 1 - Suitable Person and National Standard 8 - Food and drink. The Compliance, Investigation and Enforcement Team contacted the provision who provided an investigation response regarding the concerns raised. Ofsted is satisfied that an adequate explanation was provided to address the concerns raised. The setting continues to meet the National Standards and remains qualified for registration.

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):

- increase opportunities for young children to actively participate in sensory exploration
- develop staff's knowledge of appropriate play and learning opportunities to improve creative experiences and further promote independent learning for younger children.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- increase opportunities for parents and carers to become actively involved in their child's play and learning (also applies to care).

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