

Little Holcombe Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	316753
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Inspector	Christine Marsh
Setting Address	413 Brandlesholme Road, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 1JD
Telephone number	0161 761 4575
E-mail	holcombenursery@tiscali.co.uk
Registered person	Stuart Michael Butterworth
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 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?

Little Holcombe Nursery has been registered under the current ownership since 2001. It is run by a management team and operates from a building that is situated in a semi-rural area that is within close commuting distance of Bury and Ramsbottom. The nursery serves the local community and the wider community. The nursery has four rooms used by the children plus a kitchen and associated facilities. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

A maximum of 60 children may attend at any one time. The nursery opens from 07.30 until 18.00 daily for 51 weeks a year. The nursery provides care for up to 60 children under the age of five years. There are currently 83 children on roll from four months to under five years of age. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery employs 24 members of staff; 21 of whom work directly with the children. Of these, 13 staff hold recognised early years qualifications and all other staff are working towards a recognised qualification. A qualified teacher is employed to work 18 hours per week with the

children and developing staff. The nursery has established close links with Bury Childcare and Extended Services.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from premises that are very clean. They thrive because staff follow highly effective procedures and practices, which meet the children's needs. They stay healthy because practitioners implement appropriate hygiene procedures. Stringent procedures are in place for general cleaning. Children gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and become increasingly independent in their personal care. For example, they use the bathroom to develop the routine of washing hands after doing messy activities and after using the toilet. They do this with little adult intervention. Staff are competent in administering first aid to ensure any children with minor injuries are treated appropriately. Children requiring medication are very well catered for by a thorough procedure which is well documented.

Children benefit from the provision of very healthy snacks and meals. Fresh fruits, such as pieces of banana and mango are provided as snacks, and meals include a wide range of vegetables. Children's dietary needs are successfully met with any allergies recorded and taken into account. Children eagerly look forward to snack and mealtimes which are sociable occasions where staff sit and chat with them. Older children serve themselves and pour their own drinks developing their independence. The food provided contributes towards children having a healthy diet. Children are taught about healthy and unhealthy foods as they sort foods, with adult support, putting the healthy items into a shopping basket. In these ways children are learning to make healthy choices for themselves. Older children are able to access drinking water throughout the session from the water coolers while younger children also benefit from readily available drinks ensuring that they remain refreshed.

The outdoor environment has been extremely carefully planned with a large area of soft play surface, and an extensive grass area. Outdoor learning takes place daily and children describe with glee how they are going to jump in puddles and splash when they have got their wellington boots and weatherproof suits on. Children benefit from their experiences outside as they run about and learn to pedal bicycles and ride scooters. Other learning takes place as children play in the play houses, develop games amongst themselves, and roll balls down slopes with staff. Organised activities, such as acting out stories, for example, 'We're going on a bear hunt' also take place. These help reinforce children's learning from previous activities in other curriculum areas.

Babies also benefit from fresh air and a change of surroundings as they are taken out in buggies for walks around the local area. Some buggies hold babies so they face the staff who chat to them about what they see. For example, they watch a horse have a bridle put on and staff feed grass to the horses.

Areas are cleared for physical play indoors and children learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies as they do warm up activities and move different parts of their bodies showing enjoyment and concentration as they move in a variety of directions and at different speeds. Heat sensitive boards in two of the rooms enable the younger children to make marks and develop their creativity before they can readily make marks in a more conventional manner. Fine motor skills are developed as children play with sand and do jigsaws.

Children also have opportunities to rest as well as to be physically active. Younger children sleep in quiet, calmly lit sleeping areas following their own routines in line with parents' wishes. Comforters and blankets from home are sometimes used to help them to settle. Older children have an attractive snuggle area where they can rest if they choose.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children and their parents feel very at ease in the inviting and well decorated nursery. Adult sized comfortable chairs and a child sized chair in the outer entrance area provide a cosy space for visitors. The inner reception area is attractive with photographs of staff with children, and information and staff qualifications are on display. Staff are always available to greet visitors and provide a personal welcome. Rooms are maintained at the optimum temperature to ensure children's comfort. Exceptionally high quality wooden furniture that is appropriate in size for the children's ages, helps to promote children's sense of self-esteem along with staff who value them and their families extremely highly.

Children use an excellent range of good quality and developmentally appropriate resources which successfully promote their learning, play and comfort. Rooms are well set out with toys that are easily accessible to the babies and young children. This helps to promote opportunities for children to make choices and develop their independence. The provision of many toys that are wooden, together with interesting objects, such as small pebbles, encourage children to explore freely. Children are expertly supported by staff while they engage in exploration and structured learning activities. Heat sensitive boards in the rooms for the younger children enable children not yet ready for more formal mark making to engage in creative activities and develop their motor skills. Extremely good storage facilities inside and outdoors, together with a spacious kitchen and office facilities, contribute to the smooth running of the premises and the high quality care of the children.

Children are safeguarded as the setting is secure. Entry is gained through the use of a buzzer and only established staff who know the parents are permitted to allow access. Staff complete thorough risk assessments to monitor and maintain the safety of the premises and resources. Highly effective procedures are in place to ensure children are well protected. Children are cared for by adults who are vetted, experienced, extremely knowledgeable and skilful.

Children are well protected as staff have an extremely good knowledge of child protection procedures. They have refresher training periodically to ensure that their knowledge remains current so they can fully protect the children in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children feel safe, secure and happy in the nursery. There are excellent relationships between staff and children and children are developing harmonious relationships with one another. The high ratio of staff to children helps to increase children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff are extremely knowledgeable. They confidently follow the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum providing children with very high quality care and education.

Children benefit from varied and stimulating activities that are skilfully planned to meet children's developmental needs and interests. Babies and older children have stories read to them. They are actively encouraged to use a range of types of books including small, soft ones for the

youngest babies, and lift the flap ones. Children enjoy listening to stories, such as the one about a spider. They join in with the refrain enthusiastically showing they know the story well. Children benefit from this language rich atmosphere gaining in confidence and enjoyment in their learning.

Toddlers reach upwards towards laminated leaves mobiles that move gently catching their attention. They play amicably together enjoying each other's company while babies show their contentment with their key members of staff by gazing at them intently. Babies pass the telephone to staff saying, 'Hiya'. Staff repeat this and extend the conversation with the baby sensitively.

Children are highly stimulated by staff who maximise all learning opportunities. For example, songs and games, such as 'Simon says' and 'I'm a dingle, dangle scarecrow', are played outside as well as inside, while staff use opportunities to chat to children as they help them put on dressing up clothes and get ready for snack times.

Young children enjoy imaginative play and adults model role play as they involve children in a flight into outer space in the rocket play area. Children enthusiastically join in with '5,4,3,2,1.....blast off!'. Staff talk about the journey becoming bumpy and children bounce up and down in their seats grinning widely. The pilot uses his arms to imitate a steering wheel motion and hums loudly to indicate the high speed at which they are travelling. These gently adult led experiences provide the foundation for more child focused imaginative play in the older age groups.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Planning is extremely thorough and outlines the children's intended learning and their achievements. Planning is being developed to incorporate and extend the children's interests to enhance their engagement. This applies from the babies through to the oldest children. All children are benefiting from this increased focus on their interests. They are extremely highly motivated and have some control over their learning. Staff question children sensitively and provide clear, well structured directions and explanations that help to focus children's thinking and learning.

The rooms are divided into areas, such as a Mathematics area, a reading area, and a role play area, with stimulating activities and resources in each area. Mark making is encouraged in all areas. For example, clip boards and writing materials are available generally in addition to the resources in the writing area. This provides children with abundant opportunities to practise writing and to realise that print carries meaning.

Children engage with great enthusiasm in all activities and especially love creative activities, such as imaginative play with small world toys and making pictures. Children act out stories and number songs in their practical activities. For example, 'Five little speckled frogs' is acted out in the water tray with plastic frogs, and realistically coloured water, consolidating children's understanding of number. Children have opportunities to develop mathematical language as they move the frogs over the bridge and under the water. Children use coins in their work on foodstuffs beginning to understand the values represented by the different coins. Sorting activities take place, for example, packs of photographs of staff are sorted in a variety of ways. Children are learning about similarities and differences through these meaningful activities.

The computer is popular and both girls and boys demonstrate skilful use of the mouse. Children enjoy, and are proficient in, using programmable toys. They show a high degree of enthusiasm

and are developing their expertise in using cameras, video recorders and the metal detector. They share taking turns and confidently experimenting as they check which objects are made of metal. They experiment with confidence using these items of equipment as they learn about which items are metal and which are not, and how to focus to take photographs. This active learning fosters their abilities to share and to work collaboratively on exciting tasks.

Children visit a farm which reinforces their learning about planting and growing food, healthy eating and the birth of baby animals. Children benefit from these meaningful first hand experiences that consolidate their learning. Children enjoy role play which they lead and develop with little need for adult support as they negotiate with one another effectively showing very good social skills. Children are developing their confidence and a sense of maturity, for example, they recently visited the baby room where they shared books with the babies who loved the experience.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are expertly cared for by staff who work exceptionally well with parents and carers to meet children's individual needs and ensure they are included fully in the life of the setting. All children are warmly welcomed into the setting which gives them a strong sense of belonging. Children's work is extremely attractively displayed around the nursery which promotes their self-esteem. Toys and resources include many that represent positive images of people from different groups and people with disabilities. Issues are openly discussed and children learn to value and appreciate difference. Children learn about a variety of festivals that represent a range of religions throughout the year. Resource boxes support staff in teaching children about different ways of life so that they increase their knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

Children are very highly valued and are praised which boosts their self-esteem. Children's behaviour is considered in relation to the individual child and responded to appropriately. Children are sensitively nurtured during transitions that occur, both at the nursery and at home, to enable them to develop and learn to their full potential. Staff know children very well which helps them to recognise potential triggers for individual children and to intervene to prevent a child becoming distressed or agitated. The behaviour policy together with consistent expectations from staff help to foster good behaviour from all children and the development of strong friendships between children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff make good use of information requested on admission to meet children's care needs. Children are admitted gradually and a key worker system operates in each room to provide a first contact for parents as well as a particularly strong bond between staff and child. Parents receive a booklet about each room as children change rooms as they grow and develop. In these ways children's changing needs and general care are extremely well met. Parents express their delight with the care and education received by their comments on websites and the many 'thank you' cards they send when children leave. Parents and carers comment on how their children have progressed in their learning and improved in their behaviour since they started attending the nursery.

The partnership with the parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. Parents receive a high level of quality information about the educational provision through information displayed in the setting, regular newsletters and information about the curriculum. They are informed of

their children's progress when they collect them and they receive a daily sheet that provides an update. Parents are free to see their child's file at any time. Links between the nursery and the home are strengthened by homework tasks that involve parents reading books to their children. These include a sheet of questions parents can ask to extend their child's thinking and understanding of the story, together with suggestions for possible follow up activities. Practical activities, such as parents helping children look for objects that start with a certain letter, are also offered as homework activities to prepare children for primary school.

When children reach the pre-school stage staff discuss the option, for those who are going to the local school where their sister nursery is located, changing to that nursery in order to meet other children who will be in the same class. Staff from receiving schools are invited to the nursery to see the children in their setting. In these ways children and their families are supported in the child's transition to the next stage of their education.

When the pre-school children leave a Graduation ceremony is held to which parents are invited. Children wear mortar boards and gowns and receive a certificate. This celebration marks the end of this stage in the child's life positively enhancing their self-esteem. Afterwards there is a garden party to which wider family are invited so children can enjoy the celebration and share their enjoyment with family members.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is enhanced by the excellent organisation of the setting. Staff are well qualified and several are studying for further qualifications to improve and enhance their knowledge and the provision offered to the children. All staff undertake regular training to update their knowledge and maintain children's optimum health and well-being. Staff all share the nursery's values and are extremely dedicated to promoting the children's development and progress.

Policies and procedures are thorough which helps to ensure continuity of care and education at times of staff absence. Senior staff are very knowledgeable and have produced a booklet on curriculum matters to support all staff in their work with the children who benefit from staff's expertise.

Space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. Children are well protected and cared for by staff with an excellent knowledge and understanding of child development and child protection. Records are meticulously maintained and confidentiality is ensured. A comprehensive operational plan and consistently good ratios of staff to children ensure practitioners provide continuity of care to an exceptionally high standard.

The leadership and management is outstanding. Children benefit from the excellent management of the nursery. Staff work together very effectively to promote children's development and learning. Senior staff have an excellent awareness of the strengths of the setting and of the ways they wish to enhance the provision further. There is a very high level of commitment to improvement which has a positive impact on children's health and safety, their learning and their ability to make a positive contribution.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to address issues, such as maintaining children's privacy in the toilets. This has been addressed by providing curtains that children enjoy using demonstrating their independence. Other issues relating to children's safety and well-being have been successfully addressed.

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 can be seen on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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