

Holwell Nursery School & Holwell Holiday Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	139383
Inspection date	26 November 2007
Inspector	Mary Daniel
Setting Address	Holwell Primary School, Crouch Lane, Holwell, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 5LP
Telephone number	01963 23368
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Registered person	The Trustees of Holwell 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Holwell Nursery School and Holwell Holiday Club have been registered since 1993. They operate from the old village school building situated in the village of Holwell, Sherborne. Children have use of three play rooms, a sleep room and toilet facilities within the main building. A porta cabin has recently been installed in the grounds and toddlers will use this during term time and children attending the holiday club will use it during the school holidays. The outside area has paved, grassed and safety surfaced sections and is enclosed all round, providing different areas of physical play for all aged children.

The nursery is registered to provide full day care for a maximum of 36 children aged under eight years and there are currently 38 on roll. Older children aged up to 12 years may attend the holiday club. The nursery is in receipt of Government funding to provide nursery education and there are currently 12 funded children on register. The group is open Monday to Friday, from 08:00 - 16:30, for 50 weeks of the year, closing for two weeks at Christmas. A holiday club operates Monday to Friday, 08:00 - 16:30 during the school holidays only.

The nursery operate under a board of trustees and a committee of parents. They employ an overall nursery manager and two deputies, who are all qualified and experienced in child care and early years education. There are also eight assistants employed, the majority of whom have completed relevant child care training. The nursery receive support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted very well through the nutritious snacks provided. For example, they enjoy a variety of foods such as bananas, apples, raw carrots and baby tomatoes. They have cheese and crackers or sometimes toast, with a drink of water, squash or milk. A variety of cooking activities are planned and children make a fruit salad or some vegetable soup. They help to grow some vegetables in the garden area, for instance, sugar snap peas, strawberries and pumpkins. This contributes to them developing a strong awareness of foods that are good for them. Children's cups and beakers are kept within their reach during the day so they can access drinks when required. This helps in keeping them well hydrated. Children's dietary and medical needs are discussed with parents and recorded. Details of any accidents or administration of medication is noted and parents are asked to acknowledge the entries in writing. This helps in monitoring children's health and maintaining consistency in the care provided for each child.

Children enjoy their outside play and have fun digging in the 'mud tyre' or crawling through the caterpillar tunnel. Toddlers push their dolls' buggies around and play with some hoops. Pre-school children start to develop their co-ordination skills as they aim a soft ball at the netball post or throw a Frisbee across the play ground. Older children clamber up on the climbing frame and then slide down again. They balance on the beam or spin on the 'twizzle' poles. Children are provided with enjoyable activities for their outside play. However, full consideration is not given to the aims for all these activities, and in some sessions this impacts on the challenges provided. Children develop their personal hygiene routines well as they know to wash their hands before they eat any meals or take part in cooking activities. They use liquid soap, paper towels or a hot air hand drier, which helps in preventing the spread of infection. Suitable nappy changing procedures are followed. Staff use disposable gloves and aprons and wipe down the changing unit after use. This helps to minimise cross contamination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in welcoming play rooms, where colourful pictures and posters are displayed. Space is managed appropriately to meet children's needs. For example, a separate sleep room is available for babies and toddlers and children can independently access the child sized toilets and low sinks in the bathroom. This area has been designed to provide privacy for children, while still allowing staff supervision where required. As a result, children are supported in taking responsibility for their personal hygiene. Children play in enclosed outside play areas, with a variety of suitable physical play resources and equipment. Children sit at the picnic benches to eat their meals, under pergolas, which provide shade on sunny days, enabling them to be outside in all weathers. Play rooms are laid out to encourage children in their play. Toddlers stretch out on the carpet to watch the battery operated train go round the track. They sit on small chairs at low tables to do a jig-saw or eat their meals. Pre-school children like to sit quietly in their 'tent' to listen to a story or look out of the low window to see their friends arriving in

the morning. This helps children to feel at ease in the setting and join in with the play activities provided.

There is a range of suitable toys and resources available to support children's care and learning. For example, toddlers play with simple inset jig saws and pre-school children start to fit more complex puzzles together. This provides some suitable challenges for children in their play. Comfortable cots are provided for sleep times for younger children and staff make regular checks on them. Pre-school children benefit from their quiet time after lunch, where they lay on cushions and listen to a soothing piece of music. This helps to boost their energy for the afternoon. Rotas are in place for the monitoring and cleaning of toys and equipment, and most show as well maintained and attractive for children. However, consideration to appropriate maintenance of general resources, such as some cushions, is not fully observed and the outdoor play area is not sufficiently assessed before use.

Suitable safety prevention is in place, such as stair gates, socket covers and safety glass. Fire extinguishers are available, checked regularly and fire drills are completed. Risk assessments are completed, which contributes to minimising accidents and staff are observant of the children. However, sometimes activities, such as the water or rice tray, are placed near to a fire exit and may hinder the evacuation of children in an emergency. Hot drinks are sometimes left within children's reach. This impacts on some aspects of children's safety. Staff have completed child protection training and work towards keeping this updated. A clear policy is in place to support the management of any concerns, although some written information available is not based on current legislation.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the nursery happily and are keen to play. They show as pleased to see their friends and some give cheerful greetings on arrival. Staff get to know children well and understand their needs. For example, staff know toddlers' favourite toys to help them settle easily. As a result, children feel at ease and enjoy their time at the nursery. Planned activities are provided for all children, and are based on the Birth to three matters framework for the younger ones. This helps to provide them with an exciting variety of play experiences. Toddlers explore a tray of shaving foam and smile as they find the hidden toy elephant, gorilla or hippo. They show curiosity as they press buttons, push levers and start to turn knobs on a variety of colourful, educational, cause and effect toys. Children laugh on hearing the 'moo' of the cow, or the 'neigh' of the horse as they play with the activity farm house. This helps them begin to make connections in their actions. However, at times, sufficient consideration is not given to the organisation of some planned activities to allow children to become fully involved.

Staff effectively help children to develop their 'listening and responding' skills as they read a story about 'Goldilocks and the three bears' using puppets and teddies to illustrate what is happening. They start to 'represent' as they paint with shiny pink and blue colours and use their hands and sponge rollers to make further marks and patterns. Overall, children can easily access a good range of toys and games, which supports their independent choices in play. Toddlers excitedly reach for the dressing up clothes and put on a 'fairy' outfit or a 'builders' hat. They stand at the 'work bench' with the 'toy tools', or find the tractor on a chunky inset puzzle. Consequently, children are starting to become 'competent learners'.

Pre-school children are eager to join in activities and enjoy their nature walk across the field. They show excitement as they find some special leaves, stones and feathers to put in their

buckets and look out for the birds in the trees. They talk about the animals that might live in the hedgerow and investigate a possible 'mole hill'. Children attending the holiday club take part in a variety of exciting play activities. They learn some circus skills or take part in a music session, where they are helped to make a compact disc (CD) of songs and music. They visit a local bakery, where they put on 'bakers' hats and aprons to see how the bread is made. Consequently, all children are welcomed and encouraged to feel involved in the nursery, and a variety of interesting age appropriate activities are provided.

Nursery education

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are keen to help children learn through play and do so through a variety of interesting themed activities. For example, in looking at the topic of 'winter', children make some bird feeders and learn about where and how animals sleep in the cold weather. Staff use open ended questions well to help children think for themselves, and different words, such as 'hibernate', are introduced within their discussion. Planning provides a range of suitable play experiences, which overall cover the six areas of learning throughout the week. These activities help children to make progress in most aspects of their development. However, sufficient emphasis is not always given to what children learn through everyday routine activities, such as their free play or meal times. Children's involvement is not extended in some planned activities, and at times these become more adult directed. This impacts on some learning opportunities for children.

Children show an interest in the play provided. They use a variety of construction materials to build their models. They enjoy helping their older school friends in making paper aeroplanes, which they then have fun flying across the room. This creates lots of discussion and encourages children's co-ordination skills. Most children are starting to show clear control in their mark making and they follow the lines on their hedgehog picture to make the letter 'H'. They enjoy drawing round stencils and some begin to make some recognisable lines and shapes. However, further opportunities for children to 'mark make' for a purpose have not been fully considered. Children listen to a favourite story with interest. They join in with some repeated refrains, such as 'the big hungry bear', and know he likes strawberries to eat. Most children handle books carefully and some are starting to recognise some familiar words, for instance, children see their names on their coat pegs and their personal trays. Children start to take responsibility as they help to tidy away their toys and games. They attempt to put on their wellington boots and coats before going out to play. This helps to encourage their independence skills, although they do not pour out their own drinks at snack time. Children mix well with their peers and begin to make constructive relationships. For example, at small group time they talk to their friends about the stickers they received for being kind and helpful. They work together on building a space rocket using large boxes. This encourages their imaginative, social and creative skills. Children look at what sinks and floats as they make tissue box boats, and find the foam letters and numbers floating in the water tray. They explore the ingredients for their bird feeders and notice changes as they mix them together. This encourages children in talking about what is happening and why.

Children start to understand some positional and size language. They put their sticker book 'on top' or 'underneath' the pile, when asked, and point to the 'big' or 'little' dinosaurs in their picture book. Most children are becoming confident in counting and some can manage long sequences of numbers. They sometimes use numbers to reflect personal significance, such as their age, but are not always fully challenged in starting to independently solve some simple practical number problems. For example, within the general daily routines, and their awareness of the written number shape is not always clearly reinforced. Children's hand eye co-ordination

is promoted through a variety of creative activities provided. They use glue sticks, paint brushes and scissors to make a colourful, collage picture. They make 3D 'rockets' and 'glitter straws' for their firework display. Children fit small pieces of straws into their clay 'hedgehog' to represent the 'spikes'. They explore colour and texture as they paint or use 'glitter sand' to make their pictures and patterns. They like to play with the corn flour mixture and smile at their 'sticky chocolate fingers' when icing their 'hedgehog cakes'. As a result, children develop their sensory skills through a variety of enjoyable play activities.

Children use their imagination with the small world toys. For example, they sort the dolls house out, fitting the furniture into the different rooms. They put the pigs into their sty and push the tractor around the fields of the toy farm. They notice what adults do and then pretend to read a story to their friends, holding up the book so they can see the picture. This helps children to act out experiences they have seen or been involved in. Children are keen to join in with the activities offered and have fun at the nursery. Staff make clear observations on children's development and these help to make up each child's 'Learning story' assessment folder. This helps in monitoring children's overall progress, although emphasis is not effectively given to ensuring all areas of children's learning are sufficiently assessed. Consequently, assessments are not fully informing staff in the planning of suitable activities, which are securely based on children's existing skills and abilities. This sometimes impacts on how children are helped to make the next steps in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individuality is well respected. Their needs, such as their religion or first language, are clearly recorded on a detailed registration form. Parents also complete an initial settling in sheet to inform staff of their child's likes, dislikes, favourite toys and special words. This enables

children to feel secure and settled, as staff get to know them well. Children are effectively encouraged in learning about other cultures through an interesting range of topical activities. For example, they talk about going to France and have fun making models of the Eiffel tower with bricks and large boxes. They enjoy dressing up in Tunisian costumes and talk about their holidays abroad and at home. They make some 'passports' to use in an 'airport' topic. They sing an Italian song and make mini pizzas. This effectively contributes to children finding out about some of the differences within their world.

Children's particular additional needs are very well managed. There are clear systems in place to help identify and support children's specific developmental requirements, and activities are provided to help each child feel achievement. Close liaison with parents and involved agencies promotes consistency in the care required and all children are included within activities. Children are willing to learn some simple sign language and understand this can be an alternative way to communicate. This helps in promoting integration well. Children proudly count the stickers in their special books, and know they have received these for helping and being good. Staff use praise frequently, and show children how pleased they are with their efforts. Consequently, children's self esteem is boosted well. They take turns happily and generally share easily with their friends. Staff give clear explanations, which helps children in starting to learn the consequences of their actions, although at times some planned strategies are not consistently implemented.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive daily notes about their child's day and information on specific activities that have been provided is displayed on notices on room

doors. Regular newsletters are sent out to keep parents informed of current events and changes. They are very much supported in feeling a part of the group and a friendly welcome is given to all families. Most required parental permissions are obtained, which helps in promoting continuity in children's care. The importance of a parent's role in their child's learning and play is recognised and staff form friendly relationships with them. Staff spend time talking to parents about their child's specific routines. This helps children to feel relaxed and happy about coming to nursery as they know their needs will be met. Parents of the children receiving funded nursery education are informed of their access to their child's assessment folder and are given termly reports on their achievements. This contributes to the ongoing sharing of information with parents on their child's progress, although the reports do not clearly identify their actual stages of development across the stepping stones.

Children learn about 'kind hands' and 'gentle feet' and see pictures of these displayed in their play rooms. They learn about some cultural differences as they dress up in a national costume and talk about how others live. They help to raise money for others less fortunate as they take part in a 'toddle wobble' for Barnados or wear fancy dress for 'Children in need' day. They take part in a nursery nativity and sing some special songs for their parents. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. The nursery is aware of their regulatory responsibilities and keeps Ofsted informed of changes and events. Policies are in place to support the general daily practice offered in the nursery. Relevant documentation is in place, although some required parental permissions have not been updated. Children's developmental records are kept in a lockable cabinet and overall, consideration is given to ensuring confidentiality in use. Children's attendance is recorded appropriately and actual times of their arrival and departure are noted. This helps to support their well being in an emergency situation. Suitable daily routines are provided, which give children quiet and active play experiences. For example, they sit quietly to build with some bricks or do a jigsaw, and then go outside to throw a Frisbee in a game or push a scooter around the playground. This gives children suitable variety in their play. However, there are some activities, which are not so well organised to maximise children's learning opportunities and fully encourage their individual creative expression.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. A positive approach is given to making ongoing improvements to the nursery to extend and enhance the provision offered. Clear staff recruitment and employment procedures are in place. Required checks and references are requested, which helps in safeguarding children. The strong, parent committee meet regularly and provide clear support to staff in their roles of caring for children. Suitable induction and appraisal systems are implemented and staff are encouraged to attend ongoing training courses. This helps staff feel valued and they work well as a team. Regular discussion and meetings, contribute to reviewing how the provision operates. This helps to monitor the nursery as a whole, although this system does not clearly assess all aspects of the provision. For example, evaluations of planned activities are made, but these do not always show whether the identified aims have been achieved, and some assessments do not fully reflect children's developmental achievements in all areas of their learning. At times this impacts on the challenges provided for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, recommendations were made relating to behaviour management, child protection and use of accident and medication records. Parental signatures are now obtained for any entries made for accidents or administration of medication. This helps to promote continuity in children's care. The child protection policy has been updated to include suitable management of any allegations made against staff, which helps in safeguarding children. Some staff have completed behaviour management training and this is kept as a focus within different aspects of the provision. For example, the layout of the rooms are considered to minimise possible behaviour situations arising. Overall, this helps staff in managing children's behaviour appropriately.

At the last inspection of nursery education a key issue was brought through for more opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning and progress. Staff now provide an end of term report based on children's progress towards each of the six areas of learning, and this is shared with parents. They see what activities have been provided each day on the notices and planning sheets displayed. Consequently, this helps to encourage parental involvement in their child's learning.

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 any complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain some 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- extend the risk assessment systems to ensure children's safety in all aspects of the provision, with particular regard to their access to fire exits, and the maintenance of the outdoor area and some equipment
- review the organisation of some planned activities to ensure children are fully involved, and ensure written parental permission is obtained for any developmental observations made, and any necessary emergency medical treatment

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):

- further develop the planning systems to give more focus to the use of everyday routines and free play activities, to maximise children's learning opportunities
- further develop the assessment and evaluation systems used to monitor children's play and development, to ensure sufficient challenge is provided in all areas of their learning.

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