

Highbury College, Childcare Providers

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143448
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Registered person	Highbury College (Portsmouth) Business Services Limited
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Caterpillar Nursery, Butterfly Nursery, Ladybird Nursery, and the Kangaroo Holiday Play-scheme are all part of the Highbury College Childcare Provision. All provisions are situated within the Highbury campus in Cosham, on the outskirts of Portsmouth. The provisions care primarily for children of students and serve the local community. All children have access to secure outdoor play areas.

There are currently 86 children on roll aged from six months to under five years of age in the nurseries. Of these, 32 children are in receipt of funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The provision supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nurseries open each week day during term time only from 08:00 to 17:30. Caterpillar and Butterfly Nurseries also provide care during college holidays, with sessions from 08:00 to 17:30 hours. The holiday play scheme operates each weekday during all holiday periods from 08:00 until 18:00.

The nurseries employ 19 staff who all hold a relevant early years qualification. The play scheme employs two permanent members of staff and recruits additional staff to meet the ratios required for children attending. The numbers of children on roll in the play scheme varies.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through daily discussion and routines. For example, children are actively encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times and talk to the staff about making their hands clean to wash away the germs. Children benefit from an extremely clean and healthy environment because the staff implement stringent hygiene procedures effectively. For example, staff wear disposable gloves when preparing the children's snacks and the tables and surfaces are cleaned with antibacterial spray, helping to prevent the possible spread of infection.

Staff have a very clear understanding of the procedures to follow if an accident occurs on the premises. Staff who hold current first aid certificates are always in place and fully stocked first aid kits are available in all areas of the setting. All accidents and administered medication is clearly recorded and parents are required to sign to acknowledge the entries, helping to keep them informed. Staff discuss the children's medical and dietary needs with the parents and the information is recorded in detail. Medical alert boards are used to ensure all staff working with the children are fully aware of their individual requirements, promoting their good health.

Children are beginning to gain an understanding about healthy eating as they engage in activities during the daily routines. For example, children make fruit kebabs and talk about the importance of eating 'five a day'. Other children paint pictures of fruit for a wall display and discuss how fruit and vegetables help their muscles to grow bigger and stronger. The setting provides an extensive and varied range of fresh fruit and vegetables for the children's snacks. Meal times are a real social occasion; staff gently remind the children to use their manners, helping to develop their social skills effectively.

Children have ample opportunities to develop their large muscle skills. They practise their climbing skills on outdoor climbing frames and ride wheeled toys with control. Children's hand to eye coordination is developing well through ball games and threading activities. They learn about spatial awareness during large group activities, and are encouraged to show consideration for others as they find their own space at circle time. Children enjoy moving with control and imagination during musical movement activities. Staff are extremely enthusiastic and motivate the children exceptionally well, encouraging them to participate fully in activities such as 'Sticky Kids and Boogie Mites'. Children attending the play scheme benefit immensely from the wide range of physical activities available to them. For example, children play team games such as football, bench ball and dodge ball. They also have access to equipment such as bats, balls, skipping ropes and a parachute. Staff ensure all children enjoy the benefits of the fresh air daily as they explore the campus or visit local areas, such as the duck pond. All children have access to outdoor play areas, although the areas are not fully developed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the vibrant and stimulating play and learning environments, which are warm and welcoming. Their work is displayed effectively, valuing the children's efforts and providing parents and visitors with the opportunity to see what the children have been doing. All children have independent access to a wide and varied range of equipment and play resources suitable for their age and stage of development. Staff implement good cleaning procedures to ensure all the play resources are clean and well-maintained. Risk assessments are completed to ensure all the furniture, equipment and resources provide a safe environment for the children.

Children's safety is promoted because staff are vigilant and minimise the possible risks to children. For example, gates in the outside play areas are locked to prevent unannounced visitors from gaining access without the staff team's knowledge and stair gates are used to make areas such as the kitchens and offices inaccessible to the children. Children are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe through routines. They talk about the importance of not running inside the buildings in case they fall and hurt themselves. Fire drills are practised regularly, ensuring children and staff know the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. Staff arrive before the children and carry out daily formal risk assessments to ensure the areas to be used are safe for the children. Secure arrival and collection procedures are in place and parents use a password system if they are unable to collect the children, ensuring only authorised people have access to the children at any time.

Children are safeguarded and protected from harm because staff have a secure knowledge of child protection issues and know how to implement the internal policies and the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Designated staff within the play scheme and nurseries are responsible for child protection issues. In addition, child protection officers are available within the college. The comprehensive policies and procedures are shared with parents to ensure they are fully aware of the setting's responsibilities and include procedures to follow if an allegation is made about a member of staff, to further safeguard the children who attend.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are extremely happy and settled during their time at the setting. Staff interaction is high quality as they sit with the children and engage them in purposeful conversation. Staff participate fully in the activities, providing high levels of support and supervision for the children. For example, staff enjoy sitting with the children reading stories, using character voices, puppets, props and facial expressions to bring the stories to life. Staff have an exceptionally good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and the children's individual needs and interests. They take the time to get to know the children and their families, enabling them to plan for each child. Staff collate the key worker information and plan a broad range of experiences for the children. They draw up individual play plans or add the children's initials to the main planning to ensure the activities and experiences provided are aimed at the correct level for the children attending, providing sufficient challenges for all children, helping them to develop in all areas. The children's progress records are extremely comprehensive and staff know exactly where each child is, enabling them to help the children make good progress in all areas of their development.

Children are helped to become healthy children through a range of healthy choices from a very young age. Staff talk to the children about the importance of exercise and children take part

in large group activities, such as, parachute play, team games and 'Sticky Kids'. Children are beginning to learn about their bodies, naming body parts as they clap and sing. Children as young as 14 months are encouraged to find their own space, learning about spatial awareness and moving over to make room for others. Staff are enthusiastic and participate with lots of energy, encouraging the children to join in with the infectious activities. Younger children watch with awe as the others dance and clap, singing and jumping.

Children are becoming competent learners because they have access to a wide range of activities to develop their skills. They create junk models, paint the outdoor fences with water, and enjoy using media with different textures, such as, jelly, potato, bubbles and crazy soap. Staff plan the activities exceptionally well to ensure all the children can join in. For example, older children sit at the low-level tables and younger children access the resources from their high chairs, laughing and giggling as they play.

Children develop secure relationships with staff and are keen to invite them to participate in their play. Staff support the children effectively, helping them to develop their own ideas. For example, children discuss what they want to make with the Origami and staff suggest ways for them to create the end product without hindering their attempts. Interaction between the staff and the children is very positive in all areas of the setting. Staff sit with the children talking about their day and things that are happening at home, making them feel valued and part of the group. Children have access to an extensive range of age and stage appropriate toys and resources. However, children attending the play scheme have no opportunities to develop real and imagined play through dressing up, role-play or access to dolls. There are also limited opportunities for children in the play scheme to develop their understanding of diversity. Children have ample opportunities to explore their creativity in all the settings, freely accessing materials as they learn and play. Older children are actively encouraged to lead the sessions and choose which activities they want to participate in. The play scheme rotates half an hour long sessions ensuring the children take part in as many activities as they want and many aspects of the Highscope approach to play and learning is used in the nurseries. Children choose areas of learning rather than specific activities, developing their independence effectively.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Staff have an exceptionally strong understanding of the Foundation Stage and early learning goals. As a result, children are making good progress in all six areas of learning. Staff spend time observing the children's achievements and record what they are able to do. The key workers effectively use the information gleaned from the observations to plan a well-balanced and stimulating curriculum, which reflects the children's individual needs. Because the whole staff team are so knowledgeable they are able to make the most of incidental learning, ensuring no opportunities to extend the children's learning are missed. For example, staff continually talk to the children, opening up their options as they play, exploring and investigating new activities and experiences together. Children are keen to try new things without the fear of failure because staff are caring and supportive, ensuring the children have great fun while they learn without realising it.

Staff are skilled at offering the children enough support to build their confidence without taking away their independence. For example, staff and children work together to complete a difficult Spiderman puzzle. They look at the shapes of the pieces and talk about where they think they will fit. Staff ask open-ended questions, fully involving the children throughout, praising and encouraging them to build their confidence and self-esteem. Children benefit from

exceptionally good activities inside the play rooms and although all areas of learning are promoted, the range and quality of opportunities during outside play are limited.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is progressing well. They are beginning to take responsibility for their environment and enjoy taking on roles throughout the day. For example, children become snack or lunch helpers, helping to serve the food to the others. Children understand the rules of the group and are able to explain the daily routines. They settle down to the activities quickly and concentrate well. Children are confident and easily share their thoughts and ideas with others, in small and large groups. Children have many opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills throughout the day in all areas of the setting. They use chalks outside, write letters in the crazy soap, make lists and have access to writing materials at all times. Children have access to a well stocked, comfortable book corners and make good use of them as they choose books and snuggle down into the cushions. Children handle books correctly and often pretend to read to each other. They trace the lines of words with their fingers and make up stories from the pictures. Children understand that text has meaning as they recognise their names in print and easily find resources in the clearly labelled storage trays.

Children count at every opportunity throughout the day. For example, they count the number of cats in the books they are looking at, the cups they use at snack time and how many pieces of fruit they have. They recognise numerals on the number lines, clocks and the puzzles. Children use mathematical language to describe size, shape, quantity and position during free-play and practical activities. They talk about the train track growing bigger and the ants being smaller than the ladybirds. Children talk about more or less during lunch and as they begin to calculate using small groups of objects, identifying which has more.

Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through topics and practical activities. For example, they make lanterns for Chinese New Year, enjoy many food tasting activities throughout the year and use an extensive range of multi-cultural resources on a daily basis. They are developing a good sense of time and are able to explain the daily routines, often telling new children and visitors what will happen next. Visual time-lines are also in place as a reminder for the children, helping them to settle in and know what to expect. Children have many opportunities to explore and investigate their local community. They go on outings every term and visit local parks, the duck pond, the train station and shops.

Children use their imaginations well in the role-play areas. They have access to an extensive range of equipment and resources and self-select them to extend their own ideas. Children pretend to be chef's and make cakes. They wear fireman hats and take on the role of doctors, nurses, hairdressers and teachers during their play. Staff help to develop the children's imaginations as they act out stories, such as 'The Bear Hunt' and use props to tell the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Children sing a wide range of songs from memory and confidently match actions to rhymes. They are able to paint and create their own ideas using an wide and varied selection of media and materials.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Staff have a clear understanding of equal opportunities and ensure all children have equal access to their time, the resources and the range of activities. Children are beginning to learn about similarities and differences, such as, hair and eye colour, starting to show respect for others and accepting that

it is all right to be different. Posters, wall displays and photographs of positive images are used well in the nurseries to reflect a diverse society and children use a wide range of resources from around the world, although this is not promoted as well in the play scheme. Children are encouraged to show consideration for others as they play and sit at the snack table. They are polite and well-mannered as staff gently remind the children to use their manners, saying please and thank you. Staff take the time to get to know the children and their families well, enabling them to provide the best possible care for all the children who attend.

Staff implement good procedures to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The settings have special needs coordinators who liaise with the parents and other agencies effectively to ensure the children receive the best appropriate care for their needs. All children behave exceptionally well because staff implement the clear rules and boundaries consistently. As a result, children know exactly what is expected of them. Staff use a wide range of techniques to deal with unwanted or inappropriate behaviour, which reflects the individual children's understanding. For example, distraction is used for the youngest children, while discussion and reasoning is implemented with the older children. Staff take the time to give clear explanations to all the children, ensuring they can see they have been treated fairly, building good relationships. Children talk about the rules they would like and wall displays are used to remind the children as they play, helping them to develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Staff are extremely positive role models and praise the children, recognising their efforts and focussing on their positive behaviour, helping them to learn the rules and show consideration for others.

Children benefit greatly from the effective relationships between the staff teams and their parents. Strong communication enables them to share information about the children, ensuring their individual needs are being met. Parents receive written information daily about their children's sleep patterns, diet, activities and general well-being. Staff also organise parents' evenings once a year and provide written summaries about the children's achievements. Parents have access to the settings policies and procedures, ensuring they understand how the organisation operates on a day to day basis. Parents are invited to spend as much time as they like in the nurseries, helping them to become involved. Birth to three matters planning is displayed outside the nurseries and the wall displays inside show which aspect the activities link to, helping the parents to develop a clear understanding of how the children's development links with the planning. Staff have also developed photograph albums covering each aspect and component to help parents to make the links, showing how each activity helps their children to develop.

Partnership with parents of children who receive funding for early education is good. Parents receive high quality information about the setting's aims and objectives and how the group supports the children's care and learning in all areas. Information about the curriculum and six areas of learning are covered helping to inform the parents about what their children will be doing during their time in the nurseries. Parents have the opportunity to talk to their children's key workers on a daily basis and they are able to look at their children's records on request. However, there are no opportunities for parents to make ongoing written contributions about the children's learning in the group and at home. Parents value the commitment of the staff team and acknowledge how hard they all work. Staff prepare written summaries covering all six areas of learning for the parents twice a year, ensuring they are fully informed about their children's progress and learning in the nurseries.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The deployment of the staff is exceptional, ensuring that children receive high quality support and supervision throughout the sessions. The staff are vigilant and are skilled at keeping an eye on the whole room, not just the activities they are at. This enables them to react to anything going on in the room so that it can be dealt with quickly, efficiently and calmly allowing the children to continue with their play and learning in a relaxed atmosphere. The setting has robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure children are protected at all times.

However, there are no systems in place in the play scheme to monitor staff performance and development, or to ensure the staff's ongoing suitability. The daily routines run smoothly and flow well, enabling the children to fully participate in an extensive range of activities in small and large groups. Children are never left around waiting for something to happen because the staff team are well prepared and organised, ensuring everything is ready for the next part of the session. The entire staff team have a clear understanding of the inspection and registration process. All the paperwork and documentation is maintained to a high standard ensuring the children's play, learning and general well-being is nurtured in a caring and supportive environment. Therefore, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the setting are good. The management team have a clear understanding of their role in the setting. The staff team are extremely well-established and provide a calm and relaxed environment for the children and their families. Clear roles and responsibilities are defined enabling the nurseries to operate effectively for the benefit of the children who attend. An appraisal system is in place to ensure individual staff performance and contribution to the setting is monitored and training needs are identified. The daily routines and activities are evaluated well and adapted as necessary to ensure they meet the needs of the children, improving the delivery and quality in all areas. For example, allowing fewer children to use the sand tray at one time enabling all the children to be able to talk to staff and complete the objectives, such as talking about volume. There is a tracking system in place to ensure that all stepping stones are covered during a one year period, ensuring a well-balanced curriculum for the children. The supervisors, staff team and the manager have a clear vision for the future of the setting. They are continually assessing their own strengths and weaknesses, looking at ways to further improve and develop the quality of nursery education and care for all the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection two recommendations were raised for the Wallaby Out of School Club, which is no longer operating on the site.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to increase staff knowledge of the early learning goals and how to use the stepping stones to plan for the children's next stage of learning. They were also asked to provide additional opportunities to extend children's learning through activities, such as, snack time, lunchtime, outside play time and the accessibility of creative resources.

The setting has made very good progress. All staff providing nursery education hold early years qualifications and they have an exceptionally good understanding of the early learning goals. The children's achievements are recorded in depth and linked to the stepping stones. The key workers collate the information gathered to identify the children's next steps and incorporate

them into the short term curriculum planning, ensuring the children's individual needs are being met. Staff are skilled at using incidental learning opportunities to extend the children's learning throughout the day, including meal times and outside play. Children are able to express themselves creatively, self-selecting resources and media to create their own ideas.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 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 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):

- provide resources for children attending the play scheme to extend their real and imagined ideas through play and increase their understanding of diversity
- introduce systems to monitor staff performance and development for all staff working in the play scheme, and to ensure their ongoing suitability.

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 use of the outside play areas to ensure children receive the same quality of activities as they do inside
- provide ongoing opportunities for parents to make written contributions to the progress records about their children's learning at home and in the setting.

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