

Homesteaders Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	650074
Inspection date	06 February 2008
Inspector	Carol Brown
Setting Address	The Homestead, Sudbury Road, Gestingthorpe, Halstead, Essex, CO9 3BL
Telephone number	01787 460255
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Registered person	Susan Aitken
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 satisfactory. 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?

Homesteaders Nursery has been open for 15 years. It operates from an annexe of the house belonging to the registered provider. The nursery is situated in the rural area of Gestingthorpe. There is a large outdoor area. The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 10 children at any one time.

There are currently 27 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 17 children in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions each week.

The nursery opens five days a week for 50 weeks of the year. Opening times are 08.00 until 18.00.

Three members of staff work with the children. All three staff hold relevant early years qualifications. The provision receives support from the Pre-School Learning Alliance and the Kid's Club Network. The nursery site has a number of animals, including sheep, chickens, geese and a pot bellied pig.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a reasonably clean and hygienic environment, where they are beginning to understand good hygiene practices. Daily routines promote children's health and well being. Hand cleaning and toilet routines are effective in helping to prevent the spread of infection, for example, children wash their hands after feeding the chickens and sheep during an outdoor activity. Children have daily access to outdoor play and are gaining increasing confidence riding bikes, balancing and climbing. The staff ensure that children are appropriately dressed to play outside in inclement weather, this means that they are protected against the elements.

Children are well protected as all of the staff hold current first aid certificates and have a sound knowledge of first aid techniques, this means that they are able to provide appropriate care and attention in the event of an accident. First aid supplies are well stocked and easily accessible. Parents are required to give written consent for emergency medical treatment, which means that children receive the optimum treatment according to their specific needs. Children who are infectious are excluded from the setting to reduce the risk of cross-infection.

Children's meals are provided by parents, these are stored in the fridge to ensure that they remain fresh. Mealtime routines are a relaxed, social time for the children as they are able to request their lunch as they need it. This develops children's independence as they are able to think about their own needs. Children are developing self-help skills and request assistance from the staff as and when they need it, for example, asking staff to help them start to peel fruit. Children are developing positive social skills, for example saying 'please' and 'thank you' appropriately and asking to leave the table when they have finished their meal. Drinks are available at all times. The staff have been trained in food hygiene techniques, this means that there are procedures in place to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery is in a purpose built annexe adjacent to the providers home, there are three playrooms, which provide ample space for children to play and rest in. There are adequate toilet and washing facilities within the setting for the number of children. The playrooms are reasonably maintained and provide children with access to a variety of table top and floor based activities. However, the setting looks tired and shabby, for example, paint is peeling from wall decorations, walls are marked and stained and some of the furniture is old and worn. This does not provide a particularly welcoming environment for the children.

Toys and resources are accessible to the children and conform with safety requirements. The staff conduct risk assessment to ensure that the premises and equipment are safe and suitable for their purpose.

The premises are safe and secure as the nursery is located in a rural area, set back from the road and are only accessible via a large gate, which is kept closed whilst the children are on the premises. Additional security is provided by a coded lock on the front door, this ensures that visitors cannot access the premises unknown to the staff and children are unable to leave the nursery unsupervised. There are effective procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children and they are only released into the care of a known adult.

Emergency evacuation procedures are in place, which are conducted once a term, this ensures that children are familiar with the routines. However, as most of the children attend on a part time basis, this does not necessarily mean that all children are familiar with evacuation procedures. Fire safety equipment is installed within the nursery and it is reported that this is maintained in working order.

Children are beginning to understand about personal safety, for example, they talk about not running towards the geese as it makes them cross. Safety issues are further supported as the staff are remind children not to climb on furniture as they may fall and hurt themselves.

Children are protected as the staff have a sound knowledge of the physical and emotional signs, which could be possible indicators of abuse. There are systems in place to record and report child protection concerns. A child protection policy is in place and is available to parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and confident in the nursery, for example, they greet each other and the staff on arrival. The staff are sensitive to children's individual needs and they are given praise and encouragement for their efforts. The staff demonstrate a sound understanding of children's developmental needs and ways in which to promote their learning in an enjoyable way. Children are provided with a balanced range of activities, which supports their learning and sustains their interest. Children are able to choose activities, moving freely from room to room. Some activities are initiated by the staff, for example, a wall display celebrating Chinese New year, whilst others are child led. An example of this, was a group of three children building a 'Duplo' house and bridge, each child explained to their peers their respective parts of the construction and how they related to the overall design.

Children are actively engaged and interested in new challenges and ones they are familiar with, for example, two children were seen to complete a floor puzzle that was new to them. This was supported by staff as they encouraged the children to problem solve by counting and grouping parts of the puzzle.

Children are provided with opportunities to develop their imagination as role play resources in the form of the home corner and dressing up are provided. Children are developing an appreciation of stories and books as the staff read to them and encourage them to look at books that are familiar to them.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This is because the staff have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of Foundation Stage and learning intentions. There are systems in place, which focus on children's individual learning needs, their stage of development, and ways in, which to develop their learning. The staff are developing systems to record children's starting points, use observations to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of activities, to support children's attainments in line with the stepping stones towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. These factors will improve the quality and effectiveness of nursery education.

Children are eager to come into the nursery and are interested to learn, happy, settled and are familiar with routines. Children are beginning to form strong relationships with their peers and

already firm friendships are being formed as children actively seek out one another. Children are able to share their ideas and take turns.

Children's behaviour is generally good and they are able to understand the difference between right and wrong, for example, why it is unkind to hurt someone. Older children are able to take themselves to the toilet and redress themselves, whilst the staff offer support to younger children with these tasks. Children talk confidently about home life, for example, one child talked about a new dvd film his daddy had bought for him.

Children are able to engage in conversation with their peers and adults, taking turns and listening to the responses of others. Children's thinking and problem solving are supported as the staff ask open ended questions. More able children are able to write their own name and are given praise by the staff. Children can access tools to develop mark-making and writing skills. Children are beginning to link sounds to letters and are able to recognise the component letters of their names. Words are used as labels and the children are beginning to appreciate books and stories.

Older children are beginning to understand simple mathematical concepts, with some children able to count to over 30. They use numbers in their conversation and are starting to use simple addition and calculation. Children are able to match shapes and link this to counting.

Children's understanding of the wider community is supported through the provision of activities and resources, for example, they are engaged in activities, which celebrate cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year. Children are beginning to understand the world around them as activities and resources support their learning, these include observing and caring for the animals on the site and themed activities that study the life cycle of a frog. There are some resources, which represent positive images of society, however these are limited to a few black dolls, some dressing up clothes from other cultures and a few books. Children have access to information and communication technology in the form of computer programmes, calculators and telephones. The computer is a popular activity, which is well used by the children. They are developing good mouse control and are beginning to develop number matching and word recognition skills.

Children move around confidently and safely, negotiating space with control and co-ordination. They work co-operatively in the outdoor play area, taking turns to push one another around on bikes and cars. Children are becoming aware of their own physical needs, for example, taking a rest when they need it.

Children have access to a range of creative and sensory mediums including dough, felt pens and glue. Children's art work is displayed. Children have access to imaginative play materials and can access these freely. Several children dressed as princesses and engaged staff in a game of 'lunchtime', providing play food as crockery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Children are provided with some resources, which helps them to recognise difference and similarity within society. The staff show care and consideration and treat all children with dignity and respect. The staff ensure that children have access to all toys and resources and that there is no gender, racial or disability bias in their practice.

There are currently no children on roll with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The provider reports that the staff have developed good working relationships and a positive support network with the local authority special needs co-ordinator, who provides guidance and advice on a regular basis.

Children's behaviour is generally good and they are beginning to show care and consideration for one another. This is as a result of the staff giving clear and concise explanations to children as to the effect their behaviour is having on others, whilst taking into account their age, level of understanding and maturity.

Partnership with parents and carers of children who are in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. This is because the staff are developing systems to record children's developmental progress in line with the stepping stones of the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. Several parents were interviewed, all of whom expressed their satisfaction of the provision for their children at the nursery. Many stated that they had specifically chosen the nursery as they wanted their children to learn about the care of animals, the fact that their children are learning at their own pace and the care provided by the staff. However, several of the parents interviewed expressed their concern that the systems for recording and planning next steps in children's learning devised by the local education authority is too prescriptive and they do not want their children so rigorously tested and continually assessed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

overall Homesteader's Day Nursery meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. Daily routines help children to feel secure and confident, however these are flexible and allow for spontaneity. The staff work well as a team, are deployed effectively and understand their roles and responsibilities.

There is a commitment to on-going training and development, for example, one member of staff is currently studying for an NVQ Level 3 in childcare and education. There are plans for all staff to be trained in the new Early Years Foundation Stage. There are effective recruitment procedures in place. Documentation for the safe and effective management of the nursery is in place, in the form of policies and procedures. This promotes children's welfare and contributes to the smooth running of the provision. However, the parents notice board contains some information that is out of date alongside current details, for example, the current registration certificate is displayed alongside the certificate provided by the local authority in 2000. This could be misleading to parents.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory. The manager leads by example and utilise the strengths of individual staff members by delegating different areas of responsibility, for example, planning themed activities. Regular team meetings and individual supervision supports staff development as areas of weakness are identified and further training and support is made available.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection several actions were raised in relation the development of assessment records to show how children are making progress through the stepping stones of the early learning goals and the 'Birth to three matters' framework and to ensure that these records are

shared with parents. Systems are now in place to address these issues, however, further development is required.

Actions were raised in relation to health and safety, with a particular focus on the prevention of the spread of infection and ensuring that furniture and equipment conform to safety standards. These issues have now been addressed, therefore, children's health and welfare are protected.

An action was raised relating to increasing opportunities for children to engage in creative activities, this has now been addressed and children have access to a variety of mediums to develop their creativity.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted

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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):

- review evacuation procedures to enable more children to become familiar with the routines
- continue to develop toys, play materials and resources, which represent positive images of society
- review information displayed on the notice board to ensure that it is current.

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):

- continue to develop systems for observing, monitoring and evaluating children's learning in line with the stepping stones of the early learning goals (this 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