

# High House Nursery Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | EY269706  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 11 February 2008  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Deirdra Keating   |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | High House Farm, Mill End, Takeley, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM22 6PL |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01279 870898  |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | High House Nursery Ltd  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated  |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](http://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?

High House Nursery was registered in 2003. It operates from three buildings surrounding the main house in Takeley, Stansted. A maximum of 70 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 52 weeks a year. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 103 children from six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 32 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery employs 18 members of staff. Of these, 15 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two members of staff are currently working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because staff follow thorough and consistent procedures that are documented and proactively shared with parents. Policies regarding health and infection control are clearly displayed and shared with parents. This ensures children are protected from cross-infection. Children receive good care if they are ill or have an accident because the setting has correct and appropriate procedures in place. A well-stocked first aid kit is readily available in all rooms and a good proportion of staff have attended training. Accident and medication requirements are clearly documented in all rooms. However, the accident book in the baby unit is not always signed off by parents on collection which could compromise children's health.

Children's dietary needs are met very well. Freshly cooked hot meals are prepared in the clean and hygienic kitchen by an experienced cook. Individual dietary requirements are recorded clearly in written agreements and planned for carefully by the forward thinking cook. The food is healthy, nutritious and prepared properly from fresh, quality ingredients, balanced menus are planned and shared with parents. Freshly chopped fruit and plain biscuits are provided for snacks with a choice of milk or fruit juice. Children remain well-hydrated throughout the day as fresh drinking water is freely available for them to independently access. Children have named colourful bottles with small illustrations beside their name to guide them to their personal bottle.

Children can rest and sleep according to their needs. Babies sleep in cots with fresh individual bed linen. Staff support them well as they go off to sleep, they play calming music and dim the lights. Older children sleep on individual sleep mats with pillow cases bought from home to provide a familiar home comfort. Other children can rest in the soft and homely book corners that are cosy and comfortable. Sleeping children are checked regularly to ensure they are safe and comfortable. This is carefully documented and signed by staff. Children have daily access to the extensive grounds and enjoy a good range of activities outside in the fresh air. All children have an accessible specified area that they can use as an extension of the room. There is also a large grassed area and concreted area in which children can play in all weathers. This ensures children are active and healthy during their time at the nursery.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment that is safe and adequately maintained. The nursery has extensive grounds in a rural location and comprises a main house, a barn and a baby unit. All rooms in the nursery are softly furnished which gives a cosy environment in which children can play, eat and sleep comfortably. The nursery has been attractively decorated with photographs and pictures to give defined areas that are child-friendly and colourful. A good range of resources are stored at a low-level which promotes children's independence and decision making. Toy boxes are labelled with pictures and text, these provide a balanced range of activities that are interactive and promote children's learning in all areas. Toys for younger children are stimulating and well planned to provide a range of sensory experiences. Treasure baskets have been developed to provide a range of natural household objects and materials. Equipment is well maintained and checked regularly to ensure it is safe.

Staff conduct daily risk assessments to minimise any potential hazards to children. However, the large site and grounds have areas which are in need of attention and could compromise children's safety. Fire prevention equipment is all in place and staff carry out regular fire drills to ensure each child understands what to do in the case of a fire. The premises are secure and there are safe systems for the arrival and collection of children. Children are well protected from potential harm because staff are vigilant and have a good understanding of their responsibilities in the protection of children. A confidential incident book is available should a concern arise and staff have attended specific training.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

The children are extremely well motivated to learn through the extensive range of resources that support their care, learning and play. Children are very warmly welcomed by caring and friendly staff who are genuinely pleased to see them and know them well. They greet each child individually and offer a warm and tactile welcome. The nursery are proactive and sensitive in tailoring and providing settling-in support to suit the needs of each family. Consequently, children settle confidently to the wide range of appealing activities. Exciting and hands-on activities are available for children to choose from. These include foam, water, gloop and paint and provide tactile and sensory experiences that the children clearly relish. Staff have a comprehensive understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are clearly aware of younger children's needs. Meaningful and relevant records that are clearly linked to the relevant framework are shared proactively with parents.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They contribute to the topic-based plans which are broken down and clearly linked to stepping stones in weekly plans. Staff help children extend their learning by asking open-ended questions. These are displayed all around the room, reminding staff of ideas to help children think and learn. Children with English as an additional language are supported well by proactive and forward thinking staff. Specific training, phrase books and sourcing parents for key-words and stock phrases all help children to feel confident and make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff make regular assessments and add to children's records. However, these are not always effectively used to inform future plans. Children's records are clearly linked to the stepping stones and their next steps are identified. Some information is gained on admission, however, this does not determine children's starting points or capabilities. Children's achievements are shared with parents on a daily basis through daily feedback sheets. Staff are directly involved in children's learning throughout the session and children's behaviour is extremely good. Staff are skilled and resourceful at spotting opportunities to maximise on children's learning potential.

Children are forming good relationships with adults and peers. They work well as part of a small group as they play in the sand tray cooperating with one another to develop an imaginary cooking game. Children are developing good self-care skills as staff skilfully support them. They put on outdoor shoes and manage their personal hygiene needs competently. They learn to do up a range of fastenings as they put on coats to go outside and staff teach them how to zip and fasten their coats. Cultural and traditional days are planned for such as Chinese New Year which encourages children to respect the views and beliefs of others.

Children are making good progress in their early writing. The children use the practical life equipment which is geared towards life skills and encourages children to use and develop fine motor skills in order to help their early writing. Children link letters to sounds as they share a story, they quickly recognise sound groups and point them out. They are also starting to recognise simple words which they take to practise at home. A well-organised and comfortable book corner houses a range of both factual and fiction books.

Children are making good progress in their mathematical development. The very good range of Montessori equipment available to children enables them to develop skills in sorting, matching and estimating. Children count one another and represent the number with fingers on their hands. They use the afternoon snack time to calculate how many biscuits will be needed and give them out. Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first-hand experiences in an interesting environment. Children are learning about cold countries through pictures, reference books and plastic animals. An extremely well-resourced outdoor classroom has been specifically designed to provide an extension to the house and reflect all areas of the learning outside where children's interest and curiosity is enhanced.

There are many opportunities for children's creative play. Paint and art and craft are regularly planned for children in the well-equipped art room. Children explore a good range of media and materials. For example they make cards using sequins, glue and glitter in their own preferred style and method. Children develop their imaginary play in the role play area where they use the appealing resources to recreate roles and experiences. They are developing good dexterity skills as they use scissors to cut different textures and materials such as wool and straws. The Montessori equipment enables children to develop their hand-to-eye coordination well, they use tongs and tweezers to move natural materials from one container to another. A good range of large scale apparatus including a slide and climbing frame enables children to develop their physical abilities.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

The children in this setting are strongly valued and have an excellent sense of belonging. Staff promote an extremely warm and homely atmosphere where children are individually welcomed. Children's individual likes and dislikes are carefully obtained prior to admission which enables staff to know all children well and meet their individual needs. Each child has a family gallery displayed on the wall and children are encouraged to discuss their home lives, this helps them feel accepted and part of the community. The nursery has established strong community links through fundraising events and local visits. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs as the setting is extremely proactive in discussing the children's lives and experiences. They learn through a range of exciting hands-on experiences such as cooking, tasting and art and craft. The setting actively involves parents as they invite them in to share their cultural resources. A wide range of resources such as posters, figures and dressing-up clothes are used to reflect wider society and help children understand their differences and similarities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are warmly welcomed into the nursery. An extremely well-qualified member of staff oversees this area. There are excellent procedures in place for the close observation of children who require additional support. All staff work closely in partnership with parents and carers throughout this process. This complies fully with the required code of practice and is underpinned

by clear and concise policies. The nursery promotes equality of opportunity and provides inclusive activities for all children extremely well.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are calm, consistent and provide excellent role models. Simple, sensible nursery rules are displayed on a colourful poster at child height. The staff proactively teach good manners and promote an extremely respectful atmosphere. Staff skilfully facilitate children to politely communicate their needs. A concise and clear behavioural policy underpins practice and is actively shared with parents. Parents are welcomed into the nursery and receive excellent information regarding nursery practice and procedures. The nursery adopts an open door policy and parents and carers are welcomed in at any time.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Coffee mornings and curriculum evenings enable parents to get together and develop an understanding about how children learn in the Foundation Stage. Records and profiles are available and actively shared with parents. Daily feedback sheets give parents a regular update of children's activities and care in the nursery. A parental library houses a superb range of books and information to support parents and carers through children's stages of development. Parental feedback is proactively sought by the nursery, and used to inform future practice. A concise and clear complaints policy is in place to ensure parents are informed of how to raise a concern. Parents speak very highly of the nursery and excellent care that their children receive.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for well by motivated and dedicated staff that have had all necessary checks to ensure children's safety and well-being. Staff are well qualified and experienced providing children with good care. The premises are well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. Children are clearly settled and confident in the nursery environment.

The operational plan is well organised and implemented. Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. A clear induction process ensures that the policies and procedures are consistently applied and that staff are well supported. Children are extremely settled and secure as good ratios are always maintained and the environment is well organised. Arrival and collection times are managed safely and clearly documented.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The nursery is privately owned and led by two managers who are extremely well qualified and work daily within the nursery. They lead a dynamic team of energetic and enthusiastic staff who are strongly committed to their ongoing professional development. Consequently, children are cared for by long-serving staff who have a high regard for the well-being of all children. Staff meet regularly to review the curriculum planning to ensure that the nursery education is monitored and adapted accordingly. As a result children continue to make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are extremely forward thinking and continuously monitor the provision to highlight strengths and weaknesses. This ensures that the nursery continues to improve and children consistently make good progress. The excellent appraisal system ensures that the nursery's comprehensive policies and procedures are consistently applied. All required docs and consents are in place to ensure children are looked after according to their parents' wishes.

Overall children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider was asked to ensure an accident record is maintained and signed by the parents and staff are trained appropriately when administering medical treatments. An accident record is now maintained and mainly signed off by parents on collection and staff have attended specific training in relation to children's health needs. They were also asked to ensure that staff are aware of child protection issues and are able to implement the policies and procedures in the absence of the designated member of staff. Staff have attended training and consequently children are protected well from potential harm. The nursery was asked to detail clearly defined procedures for the emergency evacuation of the building and ensure children belong to a key group which has a consistent member of staff. The nursery conducts regular fire drills and a key worker system has been implemented in all rooms providing children with a key person to monitor and observe their development and care.

### **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.

## **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):

- ensure the accident record is signed off daily by parents on collection
- ensure that all risks to children are minimised (this refers to general maintenance).

#### **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):

- develop the use of observations to inform future planning and expand information obtained on admission in order to determine children's starting points.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)