

Highgate Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	100609
Inspection date	05 February 2008
Inspector	Asia Islam
Setting Address	Highgate Studios,, 53-57 Highgate Road, London, NW5 1TL
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Registered person	Bright Horizons Family Solutions Limited
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Highgate Children's Centre was registered in 2000 and is part of the Bright Horizons (Family Solutions) network of private nurseries. It operates from the ground floor unit of a commercial building in the London Borough of Camden. Children have access to five play areas and a small outdoor play space.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 55 children under five years. There are currently 31 children from six months to under five years on roll, this includes eight children funded for nursery education. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language. It operates five days per week from 08.00 hours until 18.30 hours and is open 51 weeks a year. Children attend a variety of sessions.

There are ten members of staff, including the manager. They all hold relevant early years qualifications and experience to work with children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is maintained to a very high standard of cleanliness. Staff consistently remind children to wash hands at the appropriate times. Children independently use the toilet area that is very well equipped with child height toilets, hand wash basins, soap dispenser and hand drying facilities. Staff frequently change the young children's nappies to support their personal well-being. Children's tables are diligently cleaned before and after mealtimes. Qualified first aid staff are present to expertly meet the needs of children in the event of accidents or illness. Effective medication policies are in place, ensuring that medication is stored and administered safely. These help to minimise cross infection and promote their good health.

Children are developing healthy eating habits as they have a broad range of nourishing meals and snacks that are prepared and cooked on the premises. Staff encourage the children to make independent choices about what, and how much, they wish to eat. Discussions about food do not always take place during meal times to extend their understanding of healthy options. Children enjoy their food and the mealtimes together with their peers and staff. More able children are encouraged to eat independently whilst the young babies are offered very good support.

The setting has a small outdoor play area that is currently out of bounds to children for safety reasons but they have access to energetic activities one day a week with a sport instructor and through regular visits to Hampstead Heath park. A suitable range of outdoor resources is available, however these are not frequently accessible to the children. They are involved in activities such as moving and dancing to music, nursery songs and rhymes and they freely move across the indoor play areas, which ensures their daily exercise needs are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for very well in a secure and well maintained environment which stimulates their interest. Attractive displays of children's work and posters ensures that the premises are bright and welcoming.

The use of the risk assessment ensures children's activities, premises and equipment are checked for safety and the necessary steps are taken to reduce any identified risks. Electrical appliances and fire equipment are checked annually by the professionals to ensure they are in working order. Children's collection arrangements are agreed in advance with the parents. Very good security measures ensure that all visitors are monitored and recorded. Fire evacuation procedures are regularly practised with the children to support their understanding of fire safety.

Children's resources are organised to enable children to independently make informed choices about their activities. They have access to a good range of resources that are very well maintained and safe for their play. Children take pride in their toys and equipment as they carefully put these away when they have finished playing. Staff encourage children to gain an understanding of how to keep themselves safe through effective explanations such as walking inside instead of running.

Children's safety on outings is promoted because staff have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow when taking children outdoors, for example, the correct child:adult ratio is maintained and the necessary written consents from parents for outings are in place. The lost and late collection policies are in place to ensure that staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow in such an event. They have a clear understanding of their duties to record and report child protection concerns to the senior staff, who take the lead role of this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have a wonderful time at the setting because staff have a good understanding about their needs. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework well to provide an inviting range of resources for children's sensory development. Their assessment records are used to plan the next step in development but this is not always clearly plotted in the planning. Children benefit from the inspiring use of action songs and rhythms to stimulate their communication skills. They have access to a good range of resources to promote their imaginative and creative play. However, the range of resources and activities for their energetic outdoor play is not always available to extend their physical development. Staff pay good attention to what children are doing and ask questions to extend their thinking and problem solving. Children are relaxed and happy because staff offer them very good care in a nurturing environment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have opportunities to learn about the wider world as they engage in activities about different cultures, for example, the Chinese New Year. They enjoy reading books together with the staff and keenly listen to an interactive story about the Chinese New Year, where staff readily use language such as tall and short to describe the sizes of the animals. Children enthusiastically imitate the sounds of the different animals with the staff, this successfully supports their vocal expression. They use the role and constructive play areas very independently and pretend to be fire fighters. Children build a fire engine with the planks of wood, making the noise of the siren whilst pretending to drive it. They have good opportunities to express experiences, thoughts and ideas through a wide range of activities and resources. Malleable materials such as sand and clay and different textured art materials are provided to ensure varied creativity both adult led and through free play. For example, they are making a three dimensional dragon for the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Children are developing good social skills as the staff remind them to say please and thank you at the appropriate times. Children are very well-behaved and have formed good relationships with each other and the staff. They confidently converse with each other and the staff, talking about their experiences both past and present. They use rulers, measuring tapes and a weighting scale to acquire an understanding of measurements. Children confidently handle colouring pencils and crayons to develop mark making skills but opportunities for writing for different purposes are not widely encouraged. They show high interest in the number and letter prints as they explore those on display and use templates to draw around. Computers and sports activities are available once a week, this means children's understanding of everyday use of technology and the need to experience energetic play is not always extended. Children show good levels of involvement and concentration and use all their senses to explore a wide range of resources and activities that helps them make good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Their assessment records, profiles and planning covers all areas of the their learning. However, the assessments records for identifying where children are along the stepping stones is not always clear.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of the beliefs and cultures of others is strongly supported through planned activities such as the celebration of the Chinese New Year. They have access to a good range of resources that reflect positive images of cultures and religion. Scripts from different cultures, such as Spanish, Hebrew and Arabic, are displayed and staff encourage children to express words in other languages to help their awareness of differences.

Children play equally with the available resources regardless of their gender. Staff encourage their preferences and choice as this promotes their self-esteem and confidence. The manager is the lead person for supporting the needs of the children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Children from all backgrounds and abilities are welcome at the setting.

Children are engrossed in their chosen activities and play very well together. They are extremely well-behaved and motivated. Children have developed good relationships between each other and the staff. They eagerly listen and respond to staff guidance, who are warm and gentle towards them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly fostered.

Children's information is regularly exchanged with the parents to ensure consistency. The relevant policies and procedures are available for parents to access on the internet and at the setting. A complaints procedure and a logging system are available. Parents expressed positive comments about the services received by their children.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Information about children's nursery education curriculum is displayed. Children's assessments and profiles are regularly shared with the parents to ensure they are fully informed and involved in their children's progress. Both formal and informal meetings are accessible to parents to discuss their children's nursery education with the staff, who value their contributions. This means parents are encouraged to participate in their children's learning. As a result, children clearly benefit from the strong relationships being established with the parents.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children enjoy their time in a well-organised and clean nursery environment. They benefit from a motivated staff team who work very well together to provide good quality childcare and education.

All the required documentation is in place and contributes to children's health, safety and well-being. Established induction training, regular staff meetings and individual support meetings are in place to ensure staff are secure in their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. As a result, they ensure children are motivated and relaxed in a nurturing environment.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The manager has a clear vision and has considerable knowledge of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn. There is a strong commitment to improvement throughout the team as instigated by the manager. Therefore, staff are keen to continually update their knowledge and skills by regularly attending a variety of training. They are highly motivated and use their childcare skills and experience to ensure children have fun and learn. The manager is aware of the improvements necessary in the children's assessment and planning records and is closely monitoring this to ensure staff clearly

document children's achievements. The setting is also aware of the need to organise resources and activities effectively to continue to extend children's energetic play, the use of everyday technology and writing for different purposes.

Improvements since the last inspection

The nursery has made good progress in addressing the recommendation made at the last inspection for care. The child protection policy now includes the roles of Ofsted and the setting is clearly aware of their responsibilities to report such concerns to the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted.

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):

- continue to enhance children's physical skills through extending outdoor activities and resources. (Also applies to nursery education)

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 extend children's learning of everyday computer technology and writing for different purposes
- continue to monitor the delivery of the Foundation Stage.

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