

Hillcrest Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY291763
Inspection date	19 February 2008
Inspector	Joan, Patricia Flowers
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Registered person	Hillcrest Nursery School Ltd
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hillcrest Nursery School Ltd has been operating for a number of years and registered as a company in 2004. The premises consist of a converted detached building in its own grounds, located in the Fulwood area of Preston. A maximum of 52 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday between 08.00 and 17.30 all year, except for Bank Holidays. Children are accommodated on two floors in groups according to age, with the pre-school age children occupying two rooms upstairs. Meals are freshly prepared on the premises each day. There are currently 92 children aged from birth to five years on role. Of these, 39 children receive funded nursery education. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and or disabilities as well as children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery has rabbits that are housed outside.

The registered provider employs 19 staff. Thirteen of these staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are working towards gaining a qualification. The registered provider holds a teaching qualification and is directly involved in the running of the nursery. Support staffs are employed to provide meals and maintain the building. Training and advice is obtain from the local authority Sure Start development and teacher team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Very effective procedures are in place to ensure staff are able to manage children's individual health, care and dietary needs appropriately. For example, clear and methodical records are kept of children's needs, such as allergies, so ensuring their continuing good health. Children learn to wash their hands after handling or feeding the pet rabbits. Staff are able to respond positively to children should they become ill or have an accident. This is possible because more than half the staff hold current paediatric first aid qualifications and first aid boxes are situated throughout the setting to allow prompt access. Good reporting methods are in place ensuring that information is shared with parents and carers about any accidents that may have occurred.

Children are cared for in a clean, bright and comfortable nursery, so helping to maintain their health and well-being. The staff follow appropriate hygiene procedures, such as, cleaning nappy changing areas after each use and wearing protective aprons and gloves at other strategic times. This helps to minimise the risk of cross-infection. Children start to develop an awareness of their own health and good practice because the staff encourage and support them through every day routines. For example, verbal reminders and visual images prompt children to wash their hands after using the toilet so are developing effective personal hygiene habits.

The nursery promotes healthy eating. Children benefit from a balance of freshly prepared meals and snacks throughout the day, which follow a four weekly menu cycle. Children enjoy choosing their preferred snacks from the varied selections of fresh fruit each morning and afternoon. The older children have recently been introduced to a free choice snack time, which promotes their choice and independence. Main meals, such as, lamb hot pot with carrots and fresh fruit salad for desert and chicken sandwiches, rice cakes with honey and cut bananas and oranges for afternoon tea, are typical daily examples that children relish. Each baby's individual feeding routine is followed according to their needs and stage of development, with their key worker always following parents and carers wishes. Drinks are available at set times throughout the day and children can also help themselves to water from the water dispensers whenever they are thirsty. Subsequently, children remain well nourished and hydrated throughout the day and start to learn how to recognise their own needs. Staff ensure they have knowledge of children's dietary needs and individual routines as soon a child starts to attend.

Children are enjoying the newly introduced outdoor continuous provision that allows them to choose to play and work inside or out. They can hence develop their physical skills and enjoy fresh air on a regular basis throughout each day. Children have access to an extensive range of large equipment outside and other resources inside that enables them to practise and extend their physical abilities. They are building their physical stamina and enjoy being active so they make excellent progress with their large muscle movements. Finer muscle development is promoted as children handle small toys and use tools like writing implements, cutlery, paintbrushes and scissors, for example. Babies too have good opportunities to develop their emerging physical skills. They use the domestic style furniture to pull themselves up as they become increasingly mobile. They confidently explore their immediate environment and handle highly appropriate play resources with interest so their hand-eye coordination is encouraged well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

All rooms are very welcoming and stimulating. Children's work and photographs of them at play are displayed around all the rooms. This helps children to develop a sense of belonging. Resources are plentiful and organised to enable children to make choices and self-select. In these ways, children develop their independence and become confident to initiate their own play easily and safely. Good use is made of natural resources to support children's learning inside as well as outdoors. Babies explore the contents of the treasure baskets with interest with planned heuristic play contributing further to their learning environment. Space in general is used well to meet children's all round needs.

Children's awareness of their own safety and the steps they can take to protect themselves and others is actively and effectively supported. Risk assessments are effective in identifying potential hazards allowing staff to minimise these to ensure children are able to play and be cared for safely. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to keep children safe from harm including what action to take in the unlikely event of a child going missing. The children are well protected from abuse and neglect because staff have a clear understanding of the child protection policy and procedures giving priority to safeguarding children's welfare. Staff attend training events, which helps them to develop a clear understanding of their roles, and responsibilities in ensuring children are safeguarded. The written policy is shared with parents but the policy contains out-of-date information about the name of the reporting agency. Procedures to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer are also not clear enough.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because key staff have attended Health and Safety training to comply with requirements. There are effective safety and security measures in place, such as the bell entry system, which includes a member of staff supervising the entrance and exit of the nursery at all times. Fire fighting equipment meets with requirements and there are clearly defined procedures for regular emergency evacuation and fire drills to raise children's awareness of keeping themselves safe. Children are beginning to learn to take responsibility for their own safety as they participate in more challenging activities, such as, climbing and sliding so develop their awareness of risk in a safe and supervised way.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All children benefit from the kind and caring approach of all staff. Children form strong relationships with their key workers who are their main carers. This helps children to settle well and build further relationships. Children under three years make good progress in their development because the staff have a sound understanding of the principles and concepts of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They work in partnership with parents, to promote continuity of care for all children. They spend lots of time encouraging children to express their needs and make choices. This helps children to develop their self-esteem and confidence. Staff use singing, books, gestures and encouraging noises to encourage children to communicate and develop their early speech. Good emphasis is given to explorative and sensory play, which is particularly good for supporting young children's learning. Hand painting activities and a range of treasure baskets containing natural materials as well as water, paint, sand and strawberry scented playdough are enjoyed by the youngest of children. Role-play areas are in all rooms and available to children at all times. This supports children's imaginative play and helps them to make sense of their own every day experiences. Outdoor play is part of the daily routine as

well as planned walks for babies in the prams and trips for older children to the library and the park that they go to on the bus. This helps children become aware of and enjoy their wider environment and the local community.

Children move freely from one activity to another. They are busy, happy and well stimulated. Activities follow children's interest and are extended according to their individual needs by staff who get to know them well. Children enjoy creative activities like finger painting to create snowflakes pictures, which they cut out using scissors, and spend time exploring corn flour and water, the play dough and the sand. They all independently access the writing area and experiment with mark making and colouring. All children engage in a broad range of activities and experiences that they enjoy. Children put their chosen toppings on their pizza and are enthusiastic during the food tasting sessions as they try different fruits. They gain confidence through the positive interactions and encouragement from staff.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff show a strong understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. A comprehensively designed educational programme is offered. Staff make ongoing observations of what children know and can do using this information to ensure activities are well matched to children's abilities and attainment. This flexible approach helps to ensure children's interests and individual learning needs are catered for. Staff are enthusiastic and playful. They build warm relationships with children. They model investigative behaviour well and make good use of open questions to make children think and express themselves. Key workers work closely with their children to encourage them to be confident, creative and independent learners. They continually strive to make learning a rewarding and enjoyable experience. As a result, children benefit from a continuous learning environment that is enriching. Consequently, children are making outstanding progress in their learning.

Through a variety of appropriate activities, children's language and communication skills are promoted effectively by, for example, listening to and joining in at story times. Children select their chosen song card to sing, either by themselves or as a whole group and they are starting to learn some simple sign language as they become confident in different ways of communicating. Staff question children effectively which helps to promote their thinking skills. Children freely access a wide variety of resources to promote their handwriting development and their early reading skills. Some children are able to recognise their own name as well as that of their friends and are starting to write their names on their artwork. They are encouraged in all areas to write for a purpose such as making lists in the role-play area as they recognise reasons for writing. They enjoy sharing books both in a group at story time and individually or with a friend and are confident about how to handle books and know how books work.

Children express themselves creatively through painting, drawing and collage work that are used to form displays that decorate their group rooms as well as for sharing at home. Music, movement and singing are integrated into the planned curriculum. Children acquire a wide repertoire of songs. They enjoy singing the Bob the Builder song 'Working together to get the job done' which they sing with much enthusiasm. They use their singing skills at singing times also to reinforce this new learning area. Some three year olds are confident enough to sing their chosen nursery rhyme to the whole group. Staff play a variety of games with the children to promote their counting and calculating skills. They are learning to match the numerals on the bikes to the corresponding numbered parking bays outside and can recognise the numbers on the back of the chairs in the group room. Children sort animal shapes into like groups and can recognise which group has more or less. Children are developing their understanding about

technology as they use programmable toys and the headphones with the tape recorder or CD player. They understand that if the batteries have run out then the remote control will not work. Items like telephones, tills and computer keyboards support children's learning in their imaginary games and when playing in the role-play 'hairdressers' area. Real props are provided so children can make connections to their real life experiences at these times, with hairdryers and different hairbrushes and combs and empty shampoo bottles being available.

Children are independent in their personal skills and display good manners at the dinner table. Children enjoy an extensive variety of activities that helps to promote their physical development exceptionally well. For example, they can confidently ride bikes, run, jump and hop outside and can negotiate with increasing skill as they stretch, climb, crawl and slide using the large wooden climbing frame in the garden. Children learn to use different techniques as they walk along the blocks, arranged as a pathway, finding easier ways like walking side ways to keep their balance. Children know that they need their coats on before going outside to play in cold weather and older children offer support to younger children with fastenings. Children have opportunities to build and construct using the large wooden bricks in the 'garden room' as they develop their spatial awareness and use their imaginations to create structures. Children were interested in constructing a mock canal system using drainpipes as they add water and discuss this way of transport. Children are learning about re-cycling and have recently been introduced to a commercially developed children's learning resource that produces compost from re-cycled food. This is a hands on way of raising children's ecological awareness about the world around them. They discuss the weather each day and benefit from having visitors, such as, a doctor coming into talk to them. Children use knowledge from such events in their free and imaginative role play when, for example, use their play doctors set to bandage teddy to 'make him better'. Children's small physical skills are developed well through using tools with the play dough, paintbrushes and pens and pencils for making marks. Children's creativity is promoted as they have free access to a range of craft resources for collage and three-dimensional design when they experiment with different materials and re-cycled containers. Children are learning how to amend and adapt their original ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are promoted effectively as staff gather all necessary information from parents when they start. Children are able to choose what they want to play with and are able to select additional resources that interest them. Children learn about other cultures by celebrating a range of world festivals throughout the year. Designated staff have undertaken additional training to enable them to support children with additional needs. All staff ensure that they work closely with parents so that every child's individual needs can be met enabling them to make good progress in their development within an inclusive care environment. One staff member is proficient in sign language and is introducing this to the children through songs at circle time. Children with English as an additional language or who are bi-lingual are supported well within this nursery. Staff are proactive in becoming familiar with some words in different languages, such as, Dutch, Urdu, Tamil and Punjabi. In these ways, children feel valued and included and so their grasp of English is promoted in partnership with parents and carers.

Children are well mannered and are learning good social skills. Staff provide good role models for the children to copy giving them clear explanations about what is acceptable behaviour. Staff help children as they learn to negotiate turn taking and how to resolve conflicts. Children start to develop their understanding about other people. Some older children show empathy

towards others, for example, when one child falls down or is crying they put their arms around each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The staff obtain all relevant information from parents and carers at admission or before children start. This ensures that staff are well equipped to provide appropriate care according to each child's individual circumstances. Excellent information both verbally and in written form are available. Lots of informative displays relating to the planned learning and play activities provided for the children are easily accessible in each age group area. Each child's individual progress file is always available to their parent or carer and staff encourage home links so that topics can be continued to promote and extend children's learning. Regular open evenings provide excellent opportunities for staff, parents and carers to discuss children's progress and to plan together their next steps.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Enthusiastic and committed staff and a strong leadership team support children's care. The quality of staff interaction with children significantly enhances children's care at this nursery. Effective recruitment procedures ensure staff are suitable people to work with children. Selection is rigorous and ensures that staff are suitably qualified, caring and kind and enjoy working with children. Staff and managers introduce new ideas and strive to continually improve the service the nursery provides. This has a good impact on the quality of care and education leading to ongoing improvements including the introduction of continuous provision in the outdoor play area. All children benefit greatly from this enhancement, in particular the pre-school age children. Effective procedures are in place to ensure staff are fully aware of and implement the nursery's policies and procedures in line with the National Standards. This ensures children's care, welfare, safety and good health is safeguarded at all times. Documentation is well organised and maintained to guarantee the efficient management of the provision. Overall, space and resources are used well to support children's care and learning. Outdoors is used particularly well by toddlers and older children, whilst the youngest children enjoy walks out in their prams on some days.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. A strong leadership and committed staff provide a rich and exciting environment that supports children's learning very effectively. Good attention is given to finding ways to provide children with a wide and varied range of opportunities in order for them to make good progress along the stepping-stones towards achieving the early learning goals. There is a strong commitment to continually finding ways to improve children's learning. Staff are encouraged to attend relevant training courses to enhance their professional skills further. This ensures good early years practice that positively benefits every child.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of care, four recommendations were made. These were to: ensure that policies and procedures are updated, including the nappy changing procedure; conduct a risk assessment on the rear outdoor play area of the premises identifying action to be taken to minimize the risk created by the broken furniture units; request written permission from all parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment prior to children starting at the

nursery; and to develop the named special educational needs coordinator's (SENCO's) knowledge and understanding of the Special Needs Code of Practice.

During the intervening period all four areas have been addressed. Policies are regularly updated and risk assessments are carried out, recoded, and acted upon as required to maintain children's safety. Staff training needs are identified and training arranged to meet the needs of the children attending and permissions from parents and carers is obtained at the time of enrolment so that children's individual needs are always priority and the requirements of registration are met.

Because of the improvements made, children's care and safety is now better assured.

Complaints since the last inspection

There has been one complaint made to Ofsted since the last inspection. Ofsted received concerns in relation to National Standard 8, Food and Drink; National Standard Annex A.6, Nappy Changing and National Standard 12, Working in Partnership with Parents. The Complaints, Investigation and Enforcement Team contacted the provision. The provision provided an investigation response regarding the concerns raised. Ofsted are satisfied the provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- Revise the child protection policy with the correct name of the reporting agency and ensure that the procedures relating to allegations made against a staff member or volunteer are clearly stated.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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