

Horizons Day Nursery & Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	129012
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	165 Hither Green Lane, Lewisham, London, SE13 6QF
Telephone number	0208 318 4125
E-mail	mail@horizonsday.fsnet.co.uk
Registered person	Horizons Day Nursery & Pre-school 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 outstanding. 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?

Horizons Day Nursery and Pre-school is one of two settings managed by Horizons Day Nursery and Pre-school Limited. It opened in 2000 and operates from a converted house in a residential area of Lewisham, London. A maximum of 35 children may attend the setting at any one time. It is open each weekday for 49 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 08:00 to 18:00. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, one child receives funding for early education. The setting serves children from the local and neighbouring communities. It is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 12 members of staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's growth and development are exceptionally well promoted as they are offered healthy and nutritious snacks and meals. These are prepared daily on the premises using fresh ingredients. Menus demonstrate that children are consistently offered a balanced range of all food types and children with special dietary requirements are offered a wide range of appropriate alternatives. Snack and meal times are used as additional learning opportunities and children learn valuable social skills as they sit in small groups, help themselves to drinks and snacks, help tidy away and leave the table when all are ready. Children's individual dietary needs are accurately recorded and there is a thorough system for checking dietary requirements and allergies, ensuring that children's health is protected at all times.

Children thrive because there are highly effective daily procedures and practices which promote their needs. The setting's comprehensive staff induction and ongoing training programme ensure that staff have a thorough knowledge of this area. Their daily support and guidance helps children gain a thorough understanding of the relevance of good hygiene and health practices. For example, children are able to explain the importance of drinking sufficient water throughout the day. The attention to detail in record keeping and the regular updating of children's records, ensure that children's health needs are accurately recorded and are consistently met. This is further supported by a wide range of comprehensive policies that ensure children's health is promoted at all times and the risk of infection is minimised. For example, there is detailed guidance regarding the care and monitoring of children who become unwell during the day. The setting is able to respond to accidents appropriately and without delay as the majority of staff have current first aid qualifications.

Children's physical development is very well promoted because they are offered an extensive range of activities and have regular opportunities for fresh air. They explore, develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in adult-led activities such as music and movement sessions, dancing and action rhymes. The development of finer manipulative skills and control are encouraged through children's participation in a wide range of activities. For example, they manipulate construction pieces, hold pencils correctly and utilise a wide range of tools when involved in crafts and playing with dough.

Children's individual development is very well promoted as staff have an excellent knowledge of child development and of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They use this with confidence to inform all activity planning and assessments for this age group, ensuring that children are always offered a balanced range of highly appropriate activities and play opportunities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety is given a very high priority and is consistently promoted because staff have an excellent understanding of this area and take positive steps to prevent accidents and to plan for emergencies. Comprehensive policies and procedures are put into practice on a daily basis by all staff. The practical use of thorough risk assessments and the regular review of these further ensure that children's safety is promoted at all times and they are able to move freely and safely around the setting. Children display an excellent understanding of how to keep

themselves safe. They describe clearly the relevance of safety procedures such as why it is important not to run indoors.

The constant attention paid by staff to all details ensures that children are cared for in a highly stimulating and welcoming setting where their work and photographs are creatively displayed. Resources are exceptionally well organised and easily accessible. This means that children are able to choose what to play with or find inspiration to extend their activities. For example, children involved in a painting activity extend this by choosing additional paints, brushes and rollers. The attention to checking all toys, resources and equipment ensures that these are always clean and safe for children to use.

Children's welfare is promoted to a high standard because staff have an excellent understanding of the principles of safeguarding children and have ensured that they are able to report and follow up concerns without delay. This is supported by ongoing training, comprehensive policies and guidance and robust procedures to ensure the recruitment and employment of suitable staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are exceptionally happy, secure and settled. They separate well from their parents and carers and eagerly explore the activities and play opportunities. They have excellent relationships with each other and with staff, confidently participating in discussions and initiating conversations. The atmosphere throughout the setting is busy yet calm and children show high levels of independence as they make choices about their activities and play. They show high levels of confidence and self-esteem because they are consistently offered appropriate support from skilled and genuinely caring staff.

Children's independent learning is fostered throughout this vibrant setting. Staff are skilled in supporting this, making excellent judgements about when to intervene and offer additional guidance. Babies and new children settle exceptionally well because there is an excellent settling-in procedure. Staff take great care to ensure that they have all relevant information regarding children's likes, dislikes and routines so that these can be accommodated. For example, babies and young children sleep according to their normal routine and staff are fully aware of details such as settling and comforters. Children's independence is consistently promoted and they are always well supported in their chosen activities. For example, a member of staff allows a child time to explore a magnetic construction set and then encourages the child to explore the concept of magnetic attraction and to count the number of pieces used.

Children are offered an extensive range of activities and play opportunities which promote their learning in all areas. Staff pay attention to the planning of activities, utilising assessments of children's progress and evaluations of activities to influence this process, thereby ensuring that every child's needs are included and their individual development is promoted. Each child has their own learning plan, which assesses their current stage, plans activities to promote the next stages and then evaluates these in order to review and plan further activities. The excellent organisation means that staff are always well prepared and resources are ready. This is further promoted by additional guidance to staff, for example regarding the set-up of rooms and managing children's behaviour to create an optimum learning environment.

Staff make full use of their training and experience to provide a stimulating learning environment and to ensure that teaching methods are highly appropriate throughout the setting. Children

are able to make excellent progress and their play has meaning because staff are enthusiastic, clear about the activities provided and have a very good understanding of how to promote learning. For example, when a small group of children are playing a domino game, a staff member models relevant language that the children could use and the children copy this, clearly stating the colours of the dominoes and their reasoning for playing a certain colour.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children have an excellent attitude to learning and are making outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. They are well prepared for school and the environment within the setting promotes their confidence so that they are able to respond positively to new challenges and confidently negotiate this transition. Their overall development is consistently promoted because staff have an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage, utilising this in all planning and assessments. The flexible, child-centred approach to planning ensures that children are able to learn at their own pace but there are systems in place to ensure that their progress is well balanced across all areas of learning.

The setting offers excellent opportunities for children to develop the attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning. For example, children show high levels of independence as they competently choose their activities throughout the day. The excellent teaching methods and thoughtful provision of stimulating resources ensure that children's natural curiosity is promoted and they eagerly explore, experiment and contribute to activities. For example, a small group of children involved in painting decide to experiment further by choosing additional colours, mixing paints and exploring the different textures produced by varying the methods of applying the paint to the canvas. Children have a strong sense of self and are skilled in expressing themselves. They have covered topic work relating to feelings and are able to realistically express these during discussions and daily conversations.

Children interact exceptionally well with others, listening carefully and competently using language to explain their thoughts and ideas. They fully understand that print carries meaning, showing a great interest in stories and books, joining in with group stories and choosing books to read independently. They confidently use writing for a range of purposes and understand that it can be used as a form of communication. For example, they write their names on their work, make books and write lists. Children use numbers in a meaningful context and understand that numbers represent sets of objects. They show an excellent awareness of mathematical concepts and are able to use their problem-solving skills on a daily basis, for example, working out how many knives and forks are needed at the tables and calculating the difference in their ages.

The thoughtful attention paid to planning and to the environment means that children have daily opportunities to observe, explore, question and be curious in an extensive range of activities that form the foundation of their later learning in subjects such as history, geography, science and technology. Children are positively encouraged to explore their environment, are self-assured and are confident to play independently and with others. They investigate objects and explore the process of growing, for example by growing their own flowers and vegetables and noting the conditions required for healthy growth. Children are extremely confident in the use of information and communication technology equipment. For example, children working on a computer competently load a compact disc, adjust the volume and follow instructions to select items and complete the programme correctly.

Children enjoy an extensive range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills. For example, they enjoy regular structured sessions where they roll, balance, negotiate obstacle courses and move in time to music. They show an excellent understanding and a positive attitude towards physical exercise and healthy lifestyles, discussing concepts such as healthy eating and good hygiene practices. Children enjoy numerous creative opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form. Examples of this include junk modelling, making collages and models and exploring textures of substances such as foam, pasta, sand and cooked vegetables. Children express themselves creatively in discussions and through role play and are well supported in this by staff who join in enthusiastically with their imaginary play. For example, children and a staff member dress up and pretend to go on a bus journey to work, discussing the type of work they do and the clothes they need to wear.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff's excellent understanding of the principles of equal opportunities ensures that children are highly valued as individuals and are consistently offered a wealth of opportunities. They are able to make choices about their play and activities and are always offered highly appropriate support from skilled, caring staff. This ensures that all children are able to participate meaningfully and develop to their full potential. Children are respected and play a full and active part in the setting. For example, their ideas are taken seriously by staff who adapt activities and daily routines to accommodate these. Children develop a strong sense of self and their self-confidence and self-esteem are greatly promoted. One example of this is the setting's annual Graduation Ceremony for children who are leaving, which helps boost their confidence and enables them to gain an understanding of themselves and of the different stages in their lives.

Children are gaining a mature understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour is exceptional as they confidently choose their activities and organise turn-taking. They show great care and concern for each other and willingly help with tasks such as tidying up between activities. Staff demonstrate excellent skills in managing children's behaviour. They are consistent and always offer children clear and realistic explanations so that they are able to understand their behaviour and take responsibility for this. Staff act as excellent role models, demonstrating a calm, polite and attentive approach to both children and adults. Children mirror this behaviour in their daily play and interactions, promoting a calm yet busy environment.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are offered an extensive variety of play opportunities and activities which promote their understanding of the wider diversities of society. They have daily access to a wide range of toys and play resources which give positive images and information about other cultures and ways of life. These include books, play figures, dressing-up clothes, posters, maps and globes. They are gaining a true understanding of differences and other cultures through their participation in a creative range of activities associated with celebrations such as Christmas, Diwali, Chinese New Year and Black History Month. They are developing an excellent appreciation of their local community through the daily use of local facilities such as parks, the post office, the bank and the library.

Children who have learning difficulties and disabilities have their needs clearly identified and met and there are highly appropriate activities and plans to ensure that they are supported in reaching their full potential. Staff are experienced and work sensitively and consistently with children, parents and other professionals to ensure that appropriate care is always offered.

High staff ratios, excellent organisation and appropriate teaching methods ensure that children are very well supported and are able to participate in all activities and routines.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are offered comprehensive information about the setting, ensuring that they are fully aware of policies and procedures. This enables them to feel confident in the staff, and in turn, pass this confidence on to their children. Excellent use is made of notice boards throughout each area of the setting. These display a wealth of information on a wide range of topics, including detailed information about the Foundation Stage, clearly showing how this links with children's play and development. This is further supported by written information detailing current topics and ideas for parents to continue at home. Parents are kept exceptionally well informed of their children's activities and progress through newsletters, regular discussions with staff, updated notice boards, written reports and meetings with their child's key worker.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Overall, children's needs are met. They benefit from the care provided by well-supported, dedicated staff. Their care and daily experiences of the setting are significantly enhanced by the exceptional quality of organisation and the thoughtful attention paid to all details relating to their development and well-being. Children's ongoing welfare and safety are promoted through the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures, which fully support and enhance their excellent childcare practice. This area is further supported by an excellent staff induction programme that ensures all staff are aware of the setting's procedures and are able to work appropriately with children at all times.

Children are offered an extensive range of activities and their varying needs are consistently met due to the excellent organisation of space. This also ensures that children are able to move safely and independently from one area to another, confidently initiating their own play and learning. All rooms are exceptionally well thought out to ensure that they are stimulating and to encourage children to explore the resources whilst still being able to concentrate on their chosen activities. For example, children can choose to sit quietly to read, participate in construction activities or organise role play scenarios.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The manager and senior staff are committed to ensuring that children receive the highest levels of care and education. The setting's capacity to improve is very strong and they are always striving to improve their practice. They have an excellent attitude to self-evaluation, actively using the results of this to formulate plans for further improvements. Staff are encouraged to evaluate their daily practice and the provision of activities. This ensures that activity planning always reflects children's diverse individual needs and the different ways in which they learn. The setting's excellent commitment to staff training and support ensures that staff feel valued, can keep up-to-date with current practice and can provide appropriate care for all children. Staff and senior managers act as excellent role models, passing on their genuine enthusiasm for their daily work with children. This creates a positive environment in which children can feel confident and are motivated to play and learn.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the setting was asked to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. Staff have attended further training and this is refreshed regularly,

further promoting children's welfare. They were asked to develop their understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour. Again, staff have attended further training and also have additional written guidance regarding behaviour management, ensuring that children's behaviour is handled appropriately and consistently. They were asked to ensure that all staff consistently meet the individual needs of the children. Children's needs and routines are now discussed with parents and accurately recorded and observed by staff, ensuring that the varying needs of all children are met.

The setting was asked to ensure that the general disposal of nappies complies with Environmental Health requirements. A specialist waste disposal company is now used, ensuring that the spread of infection is minimised and children's health is promoted. They were also asked to provide consistent support for staff and trainees by way of clear induction procedures and regular supervision. There is now a set format for staff supervision and this ensures that any training needs are identified, recorded and met. A thorough induction procedure for staff and students is also in place, ensuring that all are able to offer appropriate care to children.

At their last inspection of funded early education, the setting was asked to extend the opportunities for children to develop their independence during lunchtime. Children now help set the tables, serve themselves with side dishes and help clear away afterwards, therefore promoting their independence and learning in this area.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. Concerns were raised in August 2005 regarding staffing, daily practice and safeguarding children. These concerns relate to National Standards 2: Organisation; 3: Care Learning and Play; 11: Behaviour; 12: Working in Partnership With Parents and Carers; and 13: Child Protection. An unannounced visit was made by Ofsted and as a result, the provider was set two actions. These related to National Standard 1: Suitable Person, requiring the setting to provide information in respect of procedures for checking staff and to ensure that unchecked staff are not left alone with children; and National Standard 2: Organisation, requiring the setting to develop an action plan setting out how staff training needs will be met.

As a result of a further unannounced visit in November 2005, Ofsted was satisfied that the actions had been addressed appropriately and the provider remained qualified for registration at the time the investigations were closed.

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 outstanding. 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 MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

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

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