

# Head Start Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY365864
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 May 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Diane Mary O'Neill
<b>Setting Address</b>	Head Start Nursery School, Hockliffe Road, LEIGHTON BUZZARD, Bedfordshire, LU7 9NX
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<b>Registered person</b>	Head Start Day Nursery
<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?

The nursery opened in 1997 and was known as Head Start Nursery School until April 2005 when the company was sold and became part of the Primary Steps Nurseries. The nursery in 2007 was brought back by Head Start Day Nursery organisation and is part of a small chain of three nurseries. The nursery is located in a large Victorian house situated within the grounds of a garden centre in Leighton Buzzard in Bedfordshire. All children have access to a secure outside play area. A maximum of 61 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open Monday to Friday from 08:00 until 18:00, only closing on public holidays.

There are currently 110 children aged from three months to five years on roll. Of these 30 are in receipt of nursery education funding. Currently, children from the local area attend the nursery. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs a total of 12 staff members. Of these seven hold a relevant childcare qualification and two are working towards a qualification. The nursery employs their own cook. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children effectively learn the importance of good health and hygiene through well-planned and supported daily routines within the nursery. For example, children in Busy Bees and Owls keep themselves safe and healthy by consistently carrying out hand washing procedures before eating their snacks and meals. Low level sinks and toilets within the bathroom area, allow them to independently take care of themselves with staff support when required. Pictorial displays of hand washing procedures and a display of germs on hands done by the children, help them with their learning and understanding. Babies and children in Hedgehogs have their hands cleaned by the staff before meals and snacks. Staff operate good levels of hygiene practices such as wearing protective clothing when changing nappies which are disposed of accordingly. With these effective good practices in place children's health and welfare is fully safeguarded.

Children are successfully protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill. Staff rigorously abide by the nursery's health and safety procedures. For example, there are clear exclusion periods for certain forms of illness so protecting other children who attend. If children are taken ill then staff ensure they are made comfortable until such time as they are collected by their parents or carers. First aid and emergency procedures are well documented using appropriate forms which are signed by parents. All the staff hold a current first aid qualification and there is a rolling programme to ensure this is maintained. This ensures they fully understand and follow the correct procedures to maintain children's health and well-being.

Children benefit from an excellent well planned and presented healthy diet. The cook prepares a four weekly menu and has the weekly menu displayed for parents to see. This keeps them informed of what their children are eating. The children have a written record and staff share verbally with the parents their child's day. Parents are encouraged to discuss their child's diet or any dietary requirements with the cook and staff. The nursery successfully caters for any special dietary requirements so meeting children's individual needs. Older children's independence is encouraged as they self select their cups, plates and knives, as they help themselves to the snack which is set out. For example, spreading bread with margarine, chopping up vegetables and fruit. Younger children have their snacks prepared but can help themselves from the plates the food is on. Children have a variety of snacks such as toast, fruit and chopped vegetables, different breads and crackers. Older children have drinks of water, juice or milk which are prepared in small jugs so they can pour their own drinks. However, not all children within the nursery have constant access to drinking facilities consequently there is the possibility of them becoming dehydrated.

Children are given superb physical play experiences within the garden and indoor play facilities. These are consistently promoted through the use of a wide range of equipment and physical play opportunities which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. For example, climbing frames, bikes and sit and ride toys, doing tumbling exercise and dancing to music. Older children demonstrate increasing control when using the computer mouse, doing puzzles and building with construction materials. Younger children are encouraged and very motivated when using a variety of play materials to assist with their finer movement skills. For example, when using paint brushes to pretend to paint the garden fence, when exploring the sand and water and other malleable equipment. They effectively develop their hand-eye coordination skills through threading

activities, placing objects such as cars and small balls in tubes and watching them travel through. Babies and very young children enjoy exploring tactile type play materials.

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

The provision is good.

Overall children's welfare is safeguarded. Staff are generally vigilant when recognising hazards and take very positive steps to minimise these. Risk assessments are carried out within the nursery. However, not all staff have read the latest risk assessments drawn up by the nursery. Therefore, children's safety and welfare is potentially at risk through this lack of their up to date knowledge and awareness. Staff practice evacuation procedures with all the children on a regular basis and record these accordingly. Fire notices are situated throughout the building for everyone to see. Access to the premises is well monitored through the supervision and management of the entrance area. Visitors to the nursery are requested to provide identification and to record their presence on site in the visitor's book. These effective steps ensure children's protection and safety.

Staff create a very welcoming and stimulating environment. This is achieved by the building being attractively decorated with posters and examples of the children's own art work as well as joint effort that has been achieved in collage work. Children confidently move around freely within the inside and outside play areas which offer them extensive play opportunities. The children use a broad range of safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are well organised throughout the setting. The children are encouraged to help tidy toys away as part of the daily routine. Sensitive reminders by staff encourage children to share in their responsibility for their own safety and that of others.

Children are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures and give priority to children's welfare. Staff are confident in their knowledge of child protection, reporting concerns appropriately to senior staff and documentation is in place to support them in the event of any concerns. The nursery has a regular training programme in place to ensure staff members' knowledge and understanding is continually up to date so children's welfare is fully safeguarded.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very happy and contented, within this vibrant setting. They confidently access the stimulating and challenging range of activities and are beginning to form secure relationships with staff and other children. Staff have an extremely good awareness of the "Birth to three matters" framework and are highly skilled at ensuring this has a positive effect on the younger children's enjoyment and achievements. Staff use their expertise at planning an extensive range of activities in line with this framework. They skilfully gain and secure knowledge about what children can learn and where to further develop and challenge their learning opportunities. The children enjoy exploring the various activities in the outside area which enables them to begin to develop their investigation and exploratory skills. For example, they show wonder and surprise as they bang the hanging saucepans creating a noise, seeing and feeling objects as they explore the water play with shells, toy fish and other animals. They are beginning to experience the learning of growing plants within the nursery growing area.

Staff are highly skilled at letting the children explore and learn about their world through the various play activities. Children develop their communication skills as they respond to others

around them. With the use of verbal and non-verbal language they make their needs known to staff who are very adept at interpreting their needs. Children learn through experiences and are directly involved and interested in their play. Children learn about responsibilities and are allowed to make errors, decisions and choices as they select activities and share their play with others.

Children exhibit high levels of confidence and security and this has been achieved by the consistent support and direction of staff. Older children are able to resolve their differences when any conflicts arise. They are encouraged to talk about it and find their own solutions. This provides children with tools to become aware of the needs of others and negotiate differences. Younger children often seek out staff to share experiences with or to gain support for an activity. For example, staff hold a cardboard tube so children can race cars and balls through it.

Highly attractive displays all around the nursery give children pride in their work. Staff throughout the nursery make the experiences enjoyable and meaningful for the children which in turn aids their confidence to participate. Children are receptive to the constant praise and encouragement that is provided by staff. This has a clear impact on their self-esteem and encourages them to try new tasks and participate in activities. For example, photographic evidence shows the babies and younger children thoroughly enjoying body painting. Where they roll in the paint, feeling it and generally explore the texture and newness of this experience. Children of all ages and abilities develop a concept of counting, sorting, shape and colour and problem solving through the extremely well planned and managed activities on offer throughout the nursery.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play ensures children are motivated and engaged in a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. They effectively use this to offer enriching play experiences for all the children with very well organised and planned activities and resources. Staff use an effective range of teaching methods to motivate the children so they are keen to learn and make progress.

Planning is based on the long, medium and short term plans. This is generally well balanced across the six areas of learning and is linked to appropriate stepping stones. Assessment is based upon observations and records of the children's progress and staff informally consider children's next step in learning. However, staff do not fully monitor and assess their records to ensure that children are fully meeting all six areas of learning. Therefore, children's learning and development has the potential to be compromised.

Staff are excellent role models and inspire, praise good behaviour and actively encourage children to try things for themselves. They encourage children to gain the confidence to succeed and support them well as they aspire to do so. Staff are extremely skilled when motivating the children and know how to capture their interest by involving them in activities they can extend for themselves. For example, the staff set out dressing up clothes, and the children use their imagination to create situations. For example, some dressed in dresses and said they were going to the disco. In the garden the children can explore, experiment with musical instruments or make sounds on pots and pans hanging on the wall. Children are progressing well, supported by a highly motivated and able staff team who are confident in their abilities to develop and challenge children's learning accordingly.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery. They have a positive attitude to learning which aids their interest and building of confidence and self assurance in their play. They positively build relationships with both their peers and the staff enabling them to make the most of opportunities to communicate effectively and explore the world around them. There is a good opportunity to self-select play materials to encourage children's independence and making decisions and choices.

Children have excellent opportunities to use their mark making skills, through free expression in the writing area/ office area which is set out well with a selection of materials to aid their learning. They have opportunities to use these skills within the outdoor play with set out drawing activities, using chalks and paints. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories.

The children use very good mathematical language during their play, such as counting objects they are playing with. Attractive displays created by the children linking shapes and objects to numbers help their learning. The use of puzzles, and matching shapes help them with sorting and simple problem solving. All these activities are further developed through good staff interaction. Through the use of construction the children have good opportunities to explore shapes, sizes and problem solving. Children competently display their skills when using the computer and operate everyday technology in their play. For example, telephones, old computer and key board to pretend to do office tasks.

Children make good use of their imagination in planned and spontaneous play situations. For example, dressing up and pretending to be a donkey, bear, and princesses. They explore their creativity and express their own ideas and thoughts through their art work, music and dance using an extensive range of resources, materials and tools which assist the children in these activities. Overall, children make good progress in their learning and achieve well given their capability and starting points.

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

The provision is good.

Children attend from a variety of backgrounds and abilities and are warmly welcomed into the nursery. The staff team ensure that the resources positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop positive attitudes to others as well as learning to have a positive view of the wider world and increasing their awareness of diversity.

Children's behaviour is good throughout the nursery. Good role models and positive staff support ensures any incident is dealt with calmly and with consideration for all involved. There is an excellent team spirit throughout the nursery with children getting on with one another, playing happily together, being respectful of each other and sharing resources. All children are valued and respected as individuals and all their needs are well documented and implemented. Staff recognise that some children will need extra care and attention; so there are good strategies in place to support children with any additional need. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. All parents and children are made extremely welcome by the staff that meet and greet them each day as they arrive at the nursery. This enables a good flow of information to be shared both verbally and through informative notice boards outside the rooms, with pictures that relate to the areas of planning that are being used.

Staff are very skilled at presenting highly informative written daily sheets which help to inform the parents of what their children have been doing. Parents have the opportunity with the six month review system to discuss their child's progress and see all written observations with space for their own comments. Parents can at any time ask to see their child's observations. The nursery advocates a very open policy for sharing of information with parents. The purposeful sharing of information supports the child's learning both at home and in the nursery. Children have the opportunity to take book bags home which is another positive way of getting parents involved in supporting their learning.

Throughout the nursery there are extremely well planned induction periods, with well presented policies and procedures being readily available. Key workers have very good opportunities to discuss with parents what their children are learning within the various learning systems which the nursery advocates.

Staff are beginning to use the Birth to three matters' framework, and through newsletters and displayed planning of activities parents can see what their children will be accomplishing. Well recorded observations are shared with parents which further enhance this information.

The nursery makes parents aware of how they can make a complaint, through their policies and written information. The nursery is fully aware of its duty to log complaints, should they receive any.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are extremely relaxed and happy with in the setting. Through a thorough recruitment and vetting procedure children's welfare is safeguarded and they are effectively protected. Staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable of child development and use this information expertly in offering the high level of care and learning for children.

The premises are extremely well organised to ensure children's safety, welfare and care needs are meet to a high standard. Indoor and outdoor space is set out imaginatively to ensure children obtain the maximum enjoyment and play opportunities. This positively promotes all areas of the children's learning and development. Children arrive enthusiastically at the setting and are extremely keen to participate in the activities on offer. They confidently move freely within their rooms and play areas talking to staff and their peers. Staff work highly effectively as a team, moving with the flow of the children where they can actively involve themselves in the children's play.

Exceptionally well organised records and documents are instrumental in ensuring children's welfare. It positively enables parents to play a very active role in their child's care. The required documentation is extremely well organised and in place to support the management and efficient running of the setting. The setting effectively uses its self evaluation document to review and assesses its practices to ensure the high standards with the nursery are maintained. There are highly informative notice boards and leaflets for parents as well as excellent day to day communication to share information about their children. Most of the staff hold relevant childcare qualifications and extend their own professional development through access to training and childcare literature. Staff are very skilled at developing their child care practice, knowledge of 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage, which enables them to extend, challenge and further enhance all children's learning and development.

The leadership and management is outstanding. There is a strong leadership provided by the owner, manager, deputy and highly dedicate staff team. They are totally committed to the care and provision of nursery education for children. This is achieved through regular staff meetings, daily meetings and evaluation of activities which enable them to identify areas of strength and weakness and work on areas of improvement. The manager does regular monitoring and evaluation of the staffs' work to ensure the high standards are maintained. The staff team work hard at maintaining the children's interest and developing their learning opportunities in this fun filled environment. The staff team is very committed to continually enhance their own knowledge and learning through attending on going training. The nursery work closely with other professionals and acts upon any advice given, to effectively assist the children's learning and progress to aid their transition to school.

Overall children's needs are met.

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

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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 fresh drinking water is available at all times
- further expand children's play and learning opportunities to cover all areas of diversity
- ensure all staff are fully aware of new risk assessment for the nursery

#### **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):



- ensure that all areas within the foundation stage are checked thoroughly to ensure that all children's learning intentions can be challenged and improved.

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)