

Headstart Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	253674
Inspection date	25/09/2009
Inspector	Anne Barnsley

Setting address	The Old School, Dudley Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 9AB
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Head Start Day Nursery has been open since 1991 with further additions over the years and has now combined with an adjacent nursery to provide care for 145 children from the ages of birth to 11 years. Of these, 105 may be in the early years age group. The nursery has several different access points and can accommodate wheelchairs and people who have difficulty negotiating steps. The nursery is divided into smaller family rooms equipped for the various ages of the children with a separate club house for the older children. There are two outdoor play areas, one of which has a roof and a soft surface to meet the needs of the babies and toddlers. In addition to this, there is a large room which can be used for active play or for large group activities. This room is particularly beneficial when children are unable to access the outdoor play area. The nursery is situated close to the centre of town with parking available in the adjoining streets. Head Start nursery is part of a chain of nurseries within Lincolnshire.

The nursery is open from 7.30 am until 6.00 pm daily, except bank holidays and Christmas week. There are at present 176 children on roll in the early years age group, of whom, 59 children are in receipt of nursery education funding. The nursery represents children for whom English is a second language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group has close links with local schools and works in partnership with the local authority.

There are 33 members of staff, most of whom have child care qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The nursery provides children with rich and diverse learning experiences which enable them to make rapid progress towards the early learning goals. This is an inclusive environment where children's uniqueness is highly valued and their individual needs are met extremely well. Systems for managing the setting are efficient and extremely well organised, with only a minor area to improve. The staff are a cohesive team who share a common vision. They work extremely well together and in partnership with parents and other professionals. Through the use of a highly reflective self assessment and the commitment of the staff, the setting's ability to drive forward further improvements is excellent.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- ensuring that outdoor resources are sufficient in number and suitable for

their purpose, with specific reference to re-stocking the communication, language and literacy learning zone outdoors.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded because staff are highly committed to their duty of care to protect children. All staff are fully conversant with the child protection policy and procedure and develop their knowledge further by completing safeguarding training. Robust systems are in place to ensure the suitability of adults who work with or have close contact to children. Staff provide children with vigilant supervision. They undertake thorough risk assessments and daily safety checks to minimise any hazards. Staff have appropriate first aid qualifications to deal with minor accidents and they take swift action in the event of an emergency or if a child becomes unwell. Staff ratios are high and staff deployment is extremely well organised. Monitoring systems are highly efficient and ensure that all aspects of health and safety are constantly reviewed and implemented to the highest standard.

All staff participate in appraisals and proactively complete training that further develops their knowledge in specific areas. A training matrix is used and ensures that the staff have diverse skills, which they share with each other through regular staff and room meetings. This ensures consistency in practice and is an excellent way to cascade training and disseminate ideas and knowledge. This is a cohesive staff team who share a common vision for the setting. They work extremely well together and are highly organised and efficient. As a result they create a harmonious environment that is relaxed and conducive to developing young children's security, confidence and learning.

The key strength of this nursery is the outstanding leadership and management. The leaders and managers give staff, parents and children a very clear understanding of its ethos and philosophy to put young learners first and support them to reach their full potential. All documentation, policies and procedures accurately reflect the aims and vision of the nursery and all staff effectively translate these into practice. This is a highly reflective setting that sets high standards and drives improvements forward to achieve excellence. Since the last inspection the setting has totally revised all areas of practice and has made many changes which are commendable. Further to achieving all of the recommendations that were set at the previous inspection, the setting has made many other changes that they identified through the use of a comprehensive self evaluation. This involved all staff, parents and the views of children. The learning environment has been completely changed to enable children greater autonomy in their learning and systems for observing children and planning around their individual interests are now excellent. The setting has worked closely with the local authority since the last inspection and has actively taken suggestions onboard and put these in place to an exceptional standard. As a result this is an extremely inclusive learning environment in which all children thrive and make rapid progress towards the early learning goals.

Excellent partnerships with parents and other professionals involved with children are firmly in place and further contribute to the progress that children make. All children and families are welcome in the nursery and equality and diversity is valued and respected. This is reflected through the information that staff gather and exchange with parents and through examples of how staff develop children's understanding of valuing each other and embracing differences. Staff place a great deal of importance on finding out as much as possible about children's family life, their interests and their needs so that all children are treated with equal concern and their needs met to a very high standard. Parents are fully included in their child's care and learning and many systems are in place to involve parents in ways that do not put them under undue pressure. For example, parents may complete questionnaires or use a suggestions box to express their views. They receive customer care calls and are invited to open evenings and workshops. These are extremely well attended with, on average, an 80 percent turn out. In situations where parents may have difficulties due to work commitments, alternative arrangements are made to suit their needs. Each day staff talk to parents individually about what their child has been doing and suggest ways that they may extend and continue this at home. Parents are provided with excellent information about the nursery and their child's learning. They contribute to their child's profile and have regular access to their child's progress records. Babies have care diaries which are used as a two way means of communication and preschool children have home link books for the same purpose. Staff keep them very well informed and have established solid links that significantly contribute to a child's continuity in learning and their security.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Every child is treated with great respect and has individual care and learning programmes that fully meet their needs. Children are supported extremely well by highly attentive and knowledgeable staff who are passionate about providing children with memorable experiences. There is a calm, happy and industrious atmosphere in this setting and children are eager to learn and to communicate within the group. The building is extremely well set out and provides children with a wealth of resources in areas that create a sense of awe and wonder. This is especially noticeable in the outdoor area where the playground has been designed as an outdoor classroom with all areas of learning being provided for. The garden centre and bird watching area are excellent examples of the awe and wonder that children derive through their imaginative play and learning about nature, plants and living things. A minor weakness is that the communication, language and literacy area is not consistently restocked when resources become low.

Children spend great amounts of time learning in the outdoor environment and this significantly contributes to their good health. They are developing healthy lifestyles as they have lots of fresh air and exercise and also learn about their own needs by checking weather conditions and learning to dress appropriately. Children are extremely well nourished and have a varied diet that is freshly cooked and home-made. They are taken on lots of walks around the local area to learn about where they live, things that take place in their community and also to collect items for

activities about nature. They are supported to develop good personal hygiene habits and become very capable at doing this independently at an early age. They learn to understand their body's needs such as being thirsty or tired and independently access drinks or have a rest when they need one. Children help to clear their plates away after lunch and they are very helpful when it comes to tidying away their toys. They are very cooperative and respond extremely well to staff and the simple rules that are in place to keep them safe. They learn about road safety and know why they wear high visibility vests. Children practice fire drills and understand the need to evacuate the building swiftly and listen to staff. Special visitors who are invited to the nursery further develop children's understanding of safety, such as visits from the police and fire department.

Children are initially placed in key groups with other children in their age range. However, staff get to know all children extremely well and through the comprehensive observations they make of children's progress, may move children into areas that fully reflect their abilities and stages of development. This ensures that all children are appropriately supported and challenged in their learning and that they all derive the best possible learning experiences. Children are never bored in this nursery and in every room they are engaged in stimulating play that is fun and makes them happy. Staff sensitively join in with them when appropriate and always engage with children at their level, letting children take the lead in their play and using their skills to question, extend and develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills. Children are very confident and secure to ask staff to do things and to express their wishes. They know that staff will respond to them and help them. They communicate and listen well and show particular interest when listening to a member of staff talking to them about an Indian festival and how this compares to their Christmas. Children have many purposeful activities that promote their understanding of equality and diversity. The nursery fully reflects people's differences and exposes children to new and unfamiliar experiences in ways that they enjoy immensely, such as trying foods from around the world or dressing up in national costumes.

Children are very secure and relate extremely well to staff. They spontaneously bring stories to staff and enjoy sitting in small groups re-telling the story with each other and shouting out the plot. They enjoy singing and dancing and are very familiar with a wide range of songs and action rhymes. They have regular visits from an external music group and learn about instruments and beat in planned group activities. Children learn about art and crafts through an extensive variety of media, tactile resources, cutting, gluing and model making. Writing materials are always accessible and children use these well to represent early writing and general mark-making. This is a print rich environment and children recognise simple words, letters and numbers. They understand that print carries meaning and use examples of this well in their own play, such as resting on a sofa looking at books and using books as reference material. All children have constant access to computers and a wide range of technology, press button and programmable toys. These are used extremely well by children throughout the nursery, starting with babies who enjoy the instant result as a toy lights up or makes a noise when pressed, to the preschool children who can use computers well with precision and a clear purpose. All children in this nursery are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning and are becoming capable learners.

They all show an eager disposition towards learning and are extremely happy, fulfilled and supported by staff to the highest of standard.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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