



Heath Farm Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY152446
Inspection date	08 December 2005
Inspector	Melanie Arnold
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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Heath Farm Day Nursery opened in April 2002 and is privately owned. It operates from a purposely converted barn adjacent to the owner's house situated on the outskirts of Dunholme village in a rural area. Lincoln city is approximately five miles away. The nursery rooms are divided by low level gates and comprise of four playrooms including a baby room with sleeping facilities. There is a fully enclosed outdoor area for children to play.

The nursery is open five days a week Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 and is closed bank holidays and for a week at Christmas.

There are currently 96 children aged from birth to 5 years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 18 staff. Thirteen of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and benefit from daily opportunities to play outside in the fresh air. Their physical skills are developing well as they participate in a good range of activities inside and outside. When playing outside children like riding and pedalling bikes, climbing up the slide, throwing and catching, climbing in and out of hoops, all of which helps to promote their well-being. Younger children enjoy playing outside and accessing the good range of resources and the older children are beginning to understand how to use resources correctly. Staff promote children's skills well, as they incorporate other areas of learning when planning outside activities, for example, numbering the cars and bikes and encouraging children to park them in the parking bay which has the matching number. Children also enjoy fun physical activities inside. For example, children like to complete a 'Sticky Kids' exercise tape and to join in with ring games and action rhymes. Children are beginning to understand how exercise affects their bodies as staff plan interesting themes to cover and they also discuss how exercise makes children feel. For example, encouraging children to describe how they feel after physical activities and getting them to feel their heart beat.

Children are healthy because they are encouraged to practice good health and hygiene routines. They are beginning to understand the importance of hand washing to help prevent the spread of germs. Effective hygiene routines are also implemented by staff, which also helps to promote children's well-being. Older children are learning good self care skills as they are encouraged to wipe their own faces after meals, while younger children are helped appropriately. Children sleep according to their needs and staff follow their individual routines and parents wishes wherever possible.

Children's health is also promoted as they are provided with a balanced diet, which fully meets their dietary requirements. They enjoy and benefit from meals which are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises. Children's well-being is further promoted effectively through the provision of healthy, nutritious snacks. Drinks are provided at all meal and snack times and older children also have access to fresh drinking water, which they can independently access throughout the day. At meal and snack times children have appropriate cups, plates, bowls and cutlery depending on their ages and abilities, meeting their needs well. For example, babies have

feeder cups, bowls and spoons and are encouraged to try and feed themselves, with staff providing relevant support and help when needed. Whereas the older children have cups, plates, knives and forks, appropriate to their level of ability.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment, which is organised generally well to meet their needs. Babies are cared for in their own room, which has sleep and changing facilities, meeting their needs well. Older children move around the nursery in their key worker groups, which enables them to access a good, varied range of resources in each room. Toys and resources are well maintained and appropriate to children's age and stage of development.

Children are kept safe because of the effective systems the nursery has put in place. Risks of accidental injury are minimised because staff supervise children generally well and appropriate risk assessments are in place helping to reduce potential risks. Children's welfare is maintained effectively at all times because the majority of staff have completed first aid training and there is also a very good emergency procedure in place, detailing the nursery's precise location, ensuring the emergency services would find the nursery quickly. Children are safe and secure while at the nursery because the setting is kept fully secure, with an intercom system in place enabling staff to monitor access to the provision. Children are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe from harm as they take part in regular fire practices. Staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow should they suspect child abuse, which ensures children are protected at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and happy in their environment. A key worker system is used enabling all children to be with a familiar member of staff and to form a bond with them, helping them to settle into the nursery. Babies are well cared for and supported by staff who talk and listen to them during the day. Babies enjoy listening and looking at books with staff and joining in with singing and playing with musical instruments, which helps to promote their early language skills. Although there is a generally good range of toys within the baby room, only a limited range is made available for the babies to play with at any one time. A basic routine is followed, which provides babies with structure to their day and enables them to participate in some activities. Children enjoy playing outside and going into the creative room one at a time to do a craft activity. However, spontaneous group activities, with regard to messy, creative play are currently not available within the baby room to help fully stimulate and develop their skills in all areas. Staff interact well with the babies, resulting in them being confident. The toddler group, children under three, access a generally good range of resources and play opportunities as they go from room to room with their key worker group. These include activities like sand, water, sticking, singing, listening to stories, playing in the home corner and playing outside. Children enjoy these

activities, however, as they are planned using the Foundation Stage curriculum they are not fully appropriate to their ages or stages of development. Children are confident and their welfare promoted because staff listen and value what they are saying. Staff complete assessment portfolios on all children to show their progress. However, outcomes for children under three are currently not effectively promoted because the nursery is not using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to fully ensure activities for these children are appropriate to their abilities and to ensure they are fully challenged in all areas of development.

Nursery Education.

Teaching and learning is generally good. Staff have a generally good knowledge of the foundation stage enabling children to make sound progress in all areas. Children are settled and confident in the group. They enjoy choosing resources from the good range provided for them, which helps to promote their independence and decision making skills. Staff use appropriate questions during activities and group times, helping to promote children's thinking skills. Children are eager to learn and enjoy participating in a balanced range of activities, which are both adult led and child initiated. Activities are set out well creating an appealing environment in which children can learn through play. Short, medium and long term plans are in place to ensure all areas of the curriculum are covered satisfactorily. However, planning contains limited information concerning how children will be sufficiently challenged to move them onto the next stages of their development. Although not all adult led activities are planned, staff are clear of the area of learning being promoted. Assessments and observations are used to chart children's progress and to identify possible gaps in their learning, however, current systems are not fully effective, especially in relation to ensuring individual children are fully challenged.

Children show interest and enthusiasm when completing activities. They are confident to speak in group situations and enjoy sharing information with others. For example, during show and tell time, they enjoy discussing and showing the other children what they have brought in from home. Children's interest is beginning to be sustained at activities for longer periods of time as they get older. They are developing good self care skills as they request to go to the toilet, independently wash their hands after craft activities and try to put their own coats on. Children relate well to staff and enjoy playing with their peers, forming good relationships. They learn to take turns during games, and are beginning to share and play together well. Children's behaviour is generally good when they are in their key worker groups. They are learning right from wrong as staff discuss inappropriate behaviour with them and they are encouraged to apologise for any inappropriate actions.

Children sit generally well and enjoy listening to stories. Their interest is sustained well during story time because staff ask appropriate questions. Children are beginning to understand that print is read from left to right as staff follow the words with their fingers when reading a book. Most children correctly identify their name in print and some children are beginning to attempt to write their names and form letters correctly. However, limited opportunities are provided for children to independently practise their mark making skills. Children's understanding of letters and letter sounds is well promoted as staff concentrate on a particular letter each week. Children's understanding of number is well supported by staff during daily activities.

Staff also concentrate on a particular number, shape and colour each week, helping to promote children's understanding. Children confidently count up to fourteen and some children are beginning to show an understanding of the value of numbers. Their understanding of weight, space and measure is promoted through mathematical and cooking activities.

Children show curiosity and explore their environment. They are able to construct and build with resources and use tools appropriately for a purpose. For example, building a house out of Lego bricks and using scissors and cutters with play dough to make particular shapes. Children are beginning to develop an understanding about caring for living things as they help to plant and care for seeds, flowers and vegetables in the nursery garden. They access an appropriate range of information technology equipment and confidently use the computer. Children's understanding of the wider world is promoted well through themes and topics and also by people of interest being invited into the nursery. For example, topics covered include children learning about the importance of recycling materials, the drought in Africa and learning about other cultures and their festivals. Children also enjoy learning about the meaning of Christmas and performing a Nativity play for their parents. Children enjoy doing creative activities provided by staff and they freely access sand and water play. However, children cannot freely access a good range of craft resources to enable them to independently explore media and materials and freely use their imagination in art and design. Children like singing activities, they confidently request their favourites and sing songs from memory. They use their imagination well during activities, for example making star biscuits out of play dough, playing in the home corner and pretending to open the Christmas presents from under the tree. Children enjoy participating in an appropriate range of activities which helps to promote their physical skills. For example, holding a pencil correctly to colour, using scissors, threading and doing puzzles, all contributes to promoting children's fine manipulative skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children relate well to staff and they are happy and confident in their surroundings. Their individual needs are effectively met because staff gather good information from parents and they also get to know each child well. Children's understanding of the wider world is promoted through activities and people of interest being invited into the setting to provide children with a hands on approach helping to promote their interest. Children with special needs are well supported because staff attended relevant training, work with outside agencies and the child's parents to ensure their needs are effectively catered for. Children's behaviour is generally good when they are in their key worker groups because staff use a positive approach, which helps to promote their self-esteem. They are beginning to learn right from wrong as staff encourage children to apologise for any inappropriate actions. Children enthusiastically choose activities they would like to do and they are confident to speak in group situations. They interact well with their peers and enjoy playing and socialising with each other. Therefore, children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit because staff work well and form an effective partnership with parents and carers. Staff meet and greet parents during the morning, creating a welcoming environment. Parents are kept fully informed of the nursery's policies, procedures and practices through a brochure, information displayed in the entrance area and monthly newsletters. Parents are kept fully informed of their child's daily activities and routines through the use of verbal feedback and the use of written daily diaries for all babies. Parents are also invited into the nursery each year to watch their children perform a Nativity play. Partnership with parents and carers is good for children receiving nursery education. Parents receive good information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and they are kept well informed of their child's progress through open evenings, which are held twice a year. This enables staff to chat to parents about their child's assessment portfolio and discuss their progress. Assessment portfolios are also sent home every three months, which also helps to keep parents informed of their child's progress. Parents can continue their child's learning at home, should they wish to do so, because they are made aware of future themes their children will be covering in the monthly newsletters. Information relating to the colour, shape, number and letter of the week is also displayed in the entrance area for parent's information.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's needs are met through a caring environment. Relevant policies and procedures are in place and most records are completed with appropriate information ensuring staff are able to promote children's health, safety and well-being. Babies are cared for in their own room and older children move from room to room accessing differing resources and play opportunities. Therefore, space and resources are used generally well to meet children's needs, when they are in their key worker groups. However, organisation and deployment of staff at snack and meal times is not effectively promoting children's welfare and development. All children come together to have snacks and meals which creates an environment where children's behaviour begins to deteriorate. Children do respond well to staff who effectively gain control of the group by singing a 'stop and listen' song. Staff also do some activities whilst children are waiting for their meals and snacks, but these are not fully appropriate to the whole age group.

Leadership and management is generally good. The manager has a good understanding of her role and responsibilities and she also has a clear vision with regard to improving children's care and learning. She has an open door policy and creates an environment where staff feel valued and able to discuss issues when they arise. Children are appropriately protected due to the relevant procedures the nursery has in place for appointing, vetting and inducting staff. However, systems for vetting and inducting volunteers and students have yet to be fully implemented to ensure children's welfare is maintained. An informal staff appraisal system is in place helping to ensure staff are working well together, to identify any problems and highlight areas of development and any training needed. Staff attend relevant training courses when possible, to help them keep up to date with current childcare practices. Staff have regular planning meetings to discuss forthcoming activities and the manager ensures

staff have time to complete their planning at an appropriate time. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery agreed to develop a consent letter for babies not sleeping in cots, arrange child protection training for the designated person and to develop documentation relating to accidents and administering of medication. For nursery education they agreed to develop planning of activities and organisation of space following meals and snacks to minimise distractions and maintain children's interest and also to provide children with access to natural materials to enhance their learning experiences with regard to knowledge and understanding of the world.

The nursery has introduced an appropriate consent form, which is signed by parents and they now record accidents in full detail and obtain the relevant signatures. Although medicine records have been updated and contain some relevant information, further information has yet to be obtained with regard to recording previous dosage of medicine given and obtaining parental signatures after the medicine has been given. The manager is the designated person with responsibility for child protection and she has attended relevant training to her role. This helps to ensure children's safety is maintained. The nursery minimised disruptions to children after snack and meal times by using a different room for activities, which then helped to maintain children's interest. They also provide children with access to an appropriate range of natural resources, helping to develop their learning experiences with knowledge and understanding of the world.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection. 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- improve outcomes for children under three by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'
- develop organisation of snack and meal times to fully promote all children's welfare, development and to meet their individual needs
- ensure procedures are in place and implemented for vetting and inducting volunteers and students.

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):

- develop availability and children's free access to a good range of craft resources and mark making materials to further enhance learning experiences in relation to creative development and communication, language and literacy
- ensure observations and assessments inform future planning to clearly show how more able children will be effectively challenged and moved on to the next stages of their development.

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