



Holly Cottage Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	148607
Inspection date	26 January 2006
Inspector	Deborah Jaqueline Newbury
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Registered person	Holly Cottage Day Nursery 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Holly Cottage Nursery opened in 1998. It is a privately owned nursery offering day care for children aged from 6 months to 5 years of age and is located on the outskirts of Wokingham, Berkshire. The nursery serves families from the local community and surrounding areas.

The nursery operates from five rooms in a converted house. Children are accommodated in age related base-rooms. There are suitable toilets, changing

facilities, soft play areas and a kitchen available. There are separate enclosed outside play areas for the different age groups of children and everyone shares access to an adjacent field.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 81 children under 5 at any one time. There are currently 122 children between the ages of 6 months and 4 years on roll. Of these, 41 receive nursery education funding. The setting has systems in place to support children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery opens Monday to Thursday from 8.00 to 18.00, and 08.00 to 17.50 on Fridays, for 50 weeks of the year. There are 27 members of staff who work with the children, 16 of whom have a recognised early years qualification. There are six members of staff who are currently attending a relevant training course. Three members of the staff team are studying for higher level qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because practitioners follow appropriate procedures to ensure good standards of hygiene and to minimise the potential for the spread of infection and illness throughout the nursery. Premises are clean and well-maintained and babies benefit from the nursery's practice of not allowing anyone to wear outdoor shoes in the areas where they are accommodated. The nursery informs parents of its policy with regard to the care of sick children and provides them with information relating to exclusion periods for illness and communicable diseases. Children learn about the importance of following good personal hygiene practices as part of the daily routine. Older children are independent in such self-care skills as washing their hands at appropriate times whilst younger children receive support and supervision as they practise these skills. The display of relevant posters that remind children about the need to cover their mouths when coughing or to wash their hands after going to the toilet reinforces their awareness.

Children participate in a varied range of physical activities that contribute to a healthy life style. They have very good opportunities to play outside in the fresh air as the nursery day is organised to include several periods of outdoor play. Children and adults wrap up warmly to go outside in the cold weather. There are separate outside play areas for children of different ages that are equipped with appropriate play apparatus for different age groups. Thus, all children are sufficiently well challenged. Children regularly spend time in the nursery's soft play areas where they enjoy exploring the different equipment available.

Children have regular drinks throughout the day although they do not have independent access to drinking water at all times. Staff are aware though of when they might need to encourage greater fluid intake. Children enjoy healthy and nutritious meals and snacks which are supplied in plentiful amounts. Children's social

skills are well fostered as they sit together to eat. Staff talk to babies as they feed them, and they note and respect their decisions about not wanting more to eat, for example, as they turn their heads away. Babies and young children are encouraged to attempt to feed themselves. Children's individual dietary needs are well met because practitioners work with parents to seek relevant information about allergies and their wishes regarding food. Menus are displayed so parents are aware of what their children have to eat.

Babies sleep according to their individual routine and their parents' wishes. They are checked regularly. Staff recognise when young children are tired and they help to prepare them for sleep by talking to them about going to bed. Children settle well in comfortable sleep areas. Staff physically check sleeping babies regularly and they remain with toddlers whilst they sleep. Older children spend time relaxing after lunch.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are accommodated in age related base rooms where they have sufficient space to move around freely and sit and play in comfort. All rooms have good levels of natural light and displays of children's artwork and other posters and pictures help to create a warm and welcoming environment for everyone. There are good security and fire safety precautions in place which contribute in positive ways to children's overall safety. For example, staff control access to the building and they adhere to good procedures to ensure the safe arrival and departure of children. Fire drills are conducted regularly.

Children's safety receives generally good attention because staff take steps to identify and minimise most areas of potential risk to children inside and outdoors. However, some radiators present a potential hazard to children as they are too hot to the touch. A risk assessment is in place but, currently, this does not cover outings to the nearby woods. Children learn to keep themselves safe and to avoid accidental injury because staff make use of situations that arise to reinforce their understanding. They encourage children to be careful as they move around to avoid bumping into other children and they intervene to remind them about not running indoors.

Children are protected because staff have an understanding of issues relating to child protection and the action they should take if they have any concerns. However, nursery staff do not keep a written record of all existing injuries which may impact adversely on children's safety. Parents are informed of the setting's responsibility with regard to child protection. A high proportion of the staff team hold a valid First Aid certificate which means that they are ready and able to respond to any accidents involving children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children throughout the setting are settled and secure in the very happy atmosphere

of the nursery and they have fun. Staff are warm and caring and form good relationships with them. All children, including babies, benefit from the good opportunities they have to experience the different environments of the nursery, for example, the outside spaces and indoor soft play areas. This means that they do not stay in their base rooms for long periods and can enjoy a change of scenery.

Staff have not yet introduced the Birth to three framework of good practice into the nursery but babies and young children enjoy a variety of different activities and experiences that have regard for all areas of development. They use their senses as they enjoy exploring spaghetti, paint, and cereal and investigate a variety of everyday household items. Staff sit on the floor and play with babies and young children and they provide hugs and cuddles which adds to their sense of security. They acknowledge young children's efforts to communicate. Play materials are changed regularly throughout the day to maintain children's interest. These are placed within the easy reach of babies. Toddlers become excited as they take part in a music and movement session which is led by a visiting teacher. Staff join in wholeheartedly which adds to the children's enjoyment. Children enjoy making their own sandwiches for tea, as part of a topic about food. They choose their own filling and are encouraged to be independent although staff offer help as necessary. They have fun as they play in the large soft play room.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. All staff working with funded children contribute to planning a variety of activities that have regard for all areas of learning. These have different outcomes for children of different ages and abilities and staff are clear about what they want children to learn. Staff undertake observations of children's achievements. However, currently, arrangements for feeding these into children's progress records are not sufficiently well developed in all cases to provide a clear and up to date picture of where children are at and to identify the next steps in their learning; not all staff working with funded children are actively involved in this process.

Children display good levels of concentration as they become engrossed both in self-initiated play and when taking part in adult directed activities. Staff observe children's interest in certain activities and skilfully extend their learning through sensitive involvement and questioning. For instance, an activity involving children building towers of large bricks results in them investigating different ways of adding more bricks so that the towers are taller than them. They show interest in looking down inside the tower as they build it and a member of staff responds to this by providing them with a torch so it is easier to see. They develop their problem solving skills as they fetch toy play people of different sizes and, with the assistance of staff, investigate how they can lower these down inside the tower. Children enjoy warm and friendly relationships with others. They enjoy dressing up and co-operate with one another as they engage in imaginative play, acting out stories in small groups. Children are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility as they undertake daily tasks, such as setting the table and handing out food. This allows them to play an active role within the setting. They develop their communication skills as they chat freely to others. Children listen intently with obvious enjoyment to well-told stories. They join in with well-known phrases and respond positively as staff seek their input

or check on their understanding as they ask questions afterwards. Older children link sounds and letters. They bring in items from home that link to the letter of the week and eagerly recall other objects or words that begin with this, with the encouragement of staff. Children explore mark-making as they access easily accessible resources and older children confidently and independently write their names on their pictures. Children count well and they practice and develop problem solving skills in their play, when they use the computer and as part of the daily routine. They use appropriate mathematical language to describe size and they name colours and shapes. Children enjoy using their senses as they explore a variety of different media and materials. They take delight in playing with a tray of flour and concentrate well as they create pictures using lentils and other pulses and discuss the different textures of these. They enjoy painting using different types of paints and explore different techniques such as marble painting or making hand prints to add to a wall display within their base room. Older children remain engrossed as they investigate magnets and magnifying glasses. They use mirrors as they make kaleidoscopes and talk about the different colours they can see. Children's gross and fine motor skills are developing well. They move around confidently, with good spatial awareness. Children manoeuvre wheeled toys competently; they manage climbing apparatus well and carefully handle pens, pencils, and scissors.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit because staff take positive steps to ensure that all children are included and their individual needs met. For instance, they seek relevant information about children from parents, adapt routines as necessary to accommodate the sleep needs of young children and provide those children who are learning to cut with suitable scissors that enable them to achieve this more easily. Older children have their own named drawers where they place their work ready to go home. This adds to their sense of belonging. Children gain awareness of the wider world in which we live as they have access to resources that reflect positive images and different aspects of social diversity. Posters are displayed around the nursery, showing children from other countries and celebrations of different festivals. Children also learn about cultures and beliefs as part of planned activities throughout the year. There are suitable procedures in place to support children with special needs and those who speak other languages.

Children behave well. They show awareness of the need to take turns and share, for example, as they use the computer. They have the confidence to approach staff for help in resolving disputes. Staff handle these situations sensitively and their use of clear explanation helps children understand expectations for acceptable behaviour. Older children are reminded of group rules and the importance of good manners. They begin to respect the needs of others, as staff encourage them not to be too noisy whilst the babies are sleeping. Staff's good use of praise and encouragement boosts children's confidence and self-esteem and contributes to a positive self-image.

Children benefit because the nursery's partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents are well informed about the provision and how children spend their time. Useful information is displayed on noticeboards at both entrances to the nursery and they receive newsletters that keep them up to date. They have access to relevant policies and procedures, including the complaints procedure. Parents complete a settling-in sheet for new children attending the nursery. This means that staff are well informed of anything that might have a bearing on children's care and ensures that babies, in particular, receive care that is consistent with home routines. Relationships are friendly. There is an informal daily exchange of information and staff complete daily feed-back sheets for babies and send home a monthly report for toddlers. Parents' evenings are held twice a year. Parents of children in receipt of nursery education funding have had some opportunity to contribute their knowledge to children's progress records. They are able to share in their children's learning by helping them find items for Show and Tell sessions and children in the lower pre-school room are able to take "Bashful the Bear" home for the weekend. Parents and children are encouraged to complete a diary which staff then read out to the children. This further builds on existing links between home and nursery.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities which means that the nursery day flows well and that children are secure and settled. Children's needs are met through mostly effective organisation and the satisfactory leadership and management of the provision. There are appropriate recruitment, vetting, and induction systems in place to ensure that staff caring for children are suitable to do so and that they have relevant experience, knowledge, and skills. The management team is aware of the recent revisions to the National Standards, and the additional responsibilities now placed upon it, with regard to vetting procedures. Appraisals are used to monitor performance and identify areas for development. The value of ongoing training is recognised.

However, there are some gaps in the procedures for monitoring some aspects of children's safety within the provision and systems for ensuring that all staff working with funded children are involved in the process for completing children's progress records to ensure that these are up to date. Required documentation and other records that contribute to the health, safety, and welfare of children are in place although some lacks a little detail.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Areas for improvement identified at the last inspection related to some aspects of documentation with regard to the setting's day-care provision and, for nursery education, the recording of evaluations on planned activities.

A scrutiny of documentation shows that there are now written procedures in place for lost children and staff are fully aware of these. There is some written information relating to the actions parents and carers should take to notify the nursery if they are going to be late collecting children but this does not outline what staff will do if nobody arrives. Currently, the written procedure is not fully developed to cover this eventuality and this has been identified as an area for attention following this inspection. The setting's written complaints procedure is prominently displayed on parents' noticeboards, together with contact information for the regulator. Blank complaint forms are easily accessible to parents should they wish to make a formal complaint. The complaints procedure does not yet reflect the recent changes to the National Standards by detailing how the setting will investigate concerns or outline time scales involved. Staff working with children who are in receipt of nursery education funding keep written evaluations of their planned activities to assess the suitability of these. They use these to inform future planning.

Overall, the improvements made contribute in positive ways to children's ongoing safety, welfare, and learning within the setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received one complaint relating to National Standard 1 - Suitable Person. Concerns were raised regarding an accident at the nursery and that correct procedures were not followed. Ofsted asked the provider to conduct an internal investigation and report back. The provider responded by providing details of the accident and relevant documentation. Following this, Ofsted carried out two unannounced visits. As a result of the visits, two actions were set which the provider has met. 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):

- assess the risks to children in relation to radiators and take action to minimise these, develop further the nursery's risk assessment to include outings to the woods and ensure that staff keep a written record of all existing injuries
- develop further the written complaints procedure to detail how the setting will investigate concerns and within what time scales, and expand the procedure to be followed in the event of a child not being collected to identify the actions that the nursery will take. Improve existing procedures to monitor the temperature of radiators to ensure these do not pose a potential hazard to children

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):

- improve existing arrangements for monitoring children's progress and associated record keeping to ensure that records are up to date and identify the next steps in their learning.

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