



## Hobbyhorse Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	150061
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Sylvia June Crawford
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Old Canteen, Russell First School, Russell Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK11 1BT
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<b>Registered person</b>	Hobby Horse Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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 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?

Hobby Horse Pre-School opened in 1984 and now operates from a converted school building in the grounds of the local First school in Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open each weekday morning from 09.15 to 11.45. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 38 children aged from 2 years to under 5 years on roll. Of these,

9 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local and surrounding area. The pre-school is currently supporting a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four full time, and two part time, members of staff. Four have an early years qualification and two are working towards relevant qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a range of activities and use good resources to promote their physical development. They learn about the importance of activity in a healthy lifestyle by using the outside play area each day. Children also enjoy the orchard in better weather listening to stories, playing games and learning about the wildlife.

Children are learning good hygiene practices; they wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet and are beginning to be aware of why this is important. They use well equipped toilet and washing facilities and when necessary, staff help children to attend to personal hygiene needs. Staff complete nappy changing sensitively, taking into account children's right to privacy. The provision safeguards and promotes children's welfare through staffs knowledge and experience in first aid, sick child procedures and recording practice.

Children enjoy a generally nutritious range of snacks each day and drinking water is freely available. Staff ensure they have sufficient information from parents so they can meet the individual dietary needs of each child.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an environment that is welcoming, and child orientated. The premises are generally well decorated and children's artwork is on display contributing to their sense of achievement. Children use the areas available to them confidently and are able to access a wide range of good quality resources and equipment. Staff check toys and equipment regularly to ensure they remain safe for children's use.

Staff have a good understanding of how to achieve a balance between children's freedom and setting safe limits, and are helping children to understand potential risks and dangers. For example, ensuring they wear something on their feet or they may have their toes trodden on and taking care when riding bikes. This helps children to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Regular risk assessments are completed on the building and the play area so that children are safe both inside and outside. There is a safe procedure in place for children's arrival and departure from the setting. However, the emergency evacuation is not practised regularly, consequently children are not familiar with how to leave the building quickly and

safely.

Most staff have a good understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures in practice when necessary to protect children. However, the policy does not carry information about the procedure regarding allegations made against staff or others.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are skilled at settling children and reassuring parents and this means that children are confident and happy in the group. Children are familiar with the daily routine and they are learning to concentrate and persevere with the support and encouragement of staff. Children form good relationships with the adults and other children within the group and play happily together. They initiate their own games and join in group activities with enthusiasm, such as singing and listening to stories. This builds children's confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy a wide range of activities and experiences and are able to choose how they spend their time.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The funded children make adequate progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage curriculum. Staff plan activities for all children but learning objectives are not always clear. Staff record observations about children's achievements, however, they do not plan the next step in individual children's development. Staff do not adapt activities to challenge the more able children.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and the staff on arrival. However, they are not always encouraged to develop their independence skills. They enjoy singing familiar songs and joining in with action songs in the larger group. Children enjoy looking at books and handle them with care. They share them with staff and together in small groups as well as the large story group. Children are beginning to use their senses and the current theme supports their learning. They took delight in the activity of looking in the mirror at the colour of their eyes and then choosing paint to complete a face. Children enjoy the drawing table but have few opportunities to practise writing for different purposes and making marks in everyday activities. Children explore change as they weigh the puppies on scales. They show an interest in numbers and counting and can count confidently up to five. However, children's number skills are not reinforced or extended through regular counting and using mathematical language in everyday activities and routines.

Children are developing an interest in the world around them and the local community. They celebrate other festivals and they enjoy exploring plants and wildlife while visiting the orchard. In small groups, they enjoy visits to the post box and local shops. They are gaining good hand-eye co-ordination by using tools and smaller pieces of equipment, for example, while playing with the play dough. Children show good imagination and use role play to practise what they know, extend their

communication skills and initiate play, for example in the home corner and the café.

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

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the group. The group have good procedures in place and well trained staff to support children with special needs, although none currently attend. Children work harmoniously with others. They behave well; they are polite and are learning the simple rules of the group, and to care for others. Staff are good role models and use praise and encouragement to promote good behaviour. The group have some resources that reflect cultural diversity and celebrate other festivals; consequently this helps children to develop a positive image of themselves and others. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from parents' effective involvement in their learning with some parents working as helpers in the group. Parents are well informed about the group through the notice board, newsletter, the prospectus and a daily exchange of information. They know they can gain individual information through their child's key worker. Parents find staff approachable, caring and sensitive to their children. They contribute to their children's learning by providing items to support topics and themes.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into an appropriately organised pre-school environment in which they are safe and secure. They are able to play with a wide range of good quality resources and equipment. There are sufficient staff who are qualified in childcare working directly with the children and supervising them well.

Policies and procedures are currently being updated but are shared with parents to ensure consistency of care. However, the group does not have a clear written policy for children who may be lost. Required documentation and parental permissions are in place and this helps promote the welfare, care and learning of children. There are adequate recruitment and vetting procedure in place, but files are not well organised and there are no procedures in place to follow up outstanding suitability checks. The induction procedure is good and ensures that staff are clear about their role in the setting and are able to act in the interest of children's welfare and safety.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Regular staff meetings take place and staff work very well as a team. They are supported to attend further training to benefit children's welfare and learning but staff do not have appraisals to ensure their developmental needs are monitored and met.

There is no system in place to ensure that staff observe, evaluate and plan for funded children's next steps. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

The last Children Act inspection recommended that the pre-school develop a policy with regard to the wearing of jewellery and ensure that fresh drinking water was available to children at all times. At the previous nursery education inspection the pre-school were asked to give consideration to how observations of children's attainment may be recorded to easily identify ongoing progress through the Foundation Stage stepping stones.

The pre-school now have guidelines in their prospectus about children wearing jewellery to sessions and they have also asked parents to provide individual containers of water, which children can access at any time. Staff in the pre-school make observations of children's attainment on certain activities but they are not currently used to identify and plan children's progress through the Foundation Stage stepping stones.

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

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

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 procedures to follow up outstanding suitability checks and introduce systems for the continued support of staff
- ensure that fire drills are conducted on a regular basis and clearly recorded
- ensure that a written procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost is in clear written form and the child protection policy carries information about the procedure to follow if allegations are made against staff

### **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):

- provide opportunities for children to improve their independence skills
- plan more opportunities for children to practise mark making and writing for a purpose and to extend their number skills during everyday activities
- make regular observations of children's achievements and evaluate activities to clearly identify learning objectives and record the next step in individual children's development

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