



# Happy Days Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY297068
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Austen

<b>Setting Address</b>	Ecton Brook Community Centre, Ecton Brook Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN3 5DY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 409280
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Happy Days 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 good. 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?

Happy Day Preschool opened in 2004 and operates from the community centre adjoining Ecton Brook Primary School. It is situated in the Ecton Brook area of Northampton and is attended by children from the surrounding area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre school at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday morning from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:30 to 15:00 on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during the school term only. All children share access

to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 39 children receive funding for Nursery education.

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

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from a clean, warm and comfortable child care environment. They thrive because staff follow highly effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritional and health needs.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene practices through daily routines, and become increasingly independent in their personal care. They readily wash their hands after using the toilet, after messy play and before eating. Older children can explain that they do so to 'get rid of germs'. This is promoted further by staff who wear gloves to change younger children's nappies, disinfect the tables for snack and ensure the safe handling of food. This sustains levels of hygiene and helps to prevent the spread of infection. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have up-to-date first aid knowledge. Clear procedures are in place in the event of accidents, for the administration of medication and if children are unwell.

Children's good health is promoted by a range of wholesome, nutritious snacks. For example children enjoy fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers. Children are encouraged to try new food such as pitta bread, and are helped to begin to understand why some foods are healthy and others are not. Snack time is a relaxed social occasion where children and adults sit together around the table to enjoy their food, each others company, and develop good table manners. Children help themselves to easily accessible drinking water throughout the session. Special dietary requirements are complied with in partnership with the parents, and parents are encouraged to become involved in the healthy eating programme.

Children enjoy physical activities which contribute to their good health and have daily opportunities to get fresh air. They move spontaneously around the room, developing a good awareness of the space around them and the close proximity of others. Children are confident to try new skills, and ask for help when needed. They manoeuvre wheeled toys backwards and forwards and use a good range of equipment to develop skills such as balancing, crawling, throwing and catching. Children play parachute games, and scream with delight as they run away from 'Mr Wolf'. They handle tools such as brushes, cooking utensils, pencils and woodwork tools. This develops children's hand-to-eye co-ordination skills and strengthens small muscles effectively.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where risks of accidental injury to children are minimised because staff are vigilant and supervise the children well. Regular risk assessments help to identify and reduce potential hazards, and there is a high ratio of adults to children. This enables children to move freely and develop their play and ideas safely. Security of the premises is generally good, and there are clear procedures in place to ensure that children are collected by authorized people. For example, passwords are used when necessary for extra protection. However, the outdoor play area is currently not secure. This compromises children's safety when they play outside. Children begin to learn the importance of keeping safe by responding to the clear guidelines set out by staff. For example, children know that must not run inside the premises. Children are taught about the risks associated with their activities. They learn how to handle tools, such as, scissors, screwdrivers and hammers safely. Children learn to safely cross the road when walking within the community, that they must stop, look and listen, and be aware of strangers.

Children are well protected because staff have a clear understanding of the local child protection guidelines and procedures, giving high priority to children's welfare.

Children are interested in the wide range of good quality toys and equipment. Staff check the equipment and resources regularly to ensure that they remain safe, and that they are suitable for the children's individual age and stage of development.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the welcoming pre-school. They enjoy their time at the group and independently select from the range of activities and resources provided, building on their natural curiosity as learners. For example, children dig in the sand, explore the play dough, wash the dolls and build models using construction resources. Relationships are good at all levels, staff take time to listen to the children and value what they say. Children who are new to the pre-school are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive to their individual needs. This develops children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff are currently developing the implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide activities to meet the needs of younger children.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are friendly, interested and keen to learn. They learn to sit quietly and listen to staff, for example, during circle and story time. Children are developing the confidence to try new activities, and form good relationships with staff and each other. This helps children feel secure and develops a positive sense of themselves. Children develop their independence. For example, they go to the toilet by themselves, and wash their hands after messy play.

Children interact and communicate with growing confidence. They develop their early reading skills as they link sounds to letters and recognise their names from cards. At 'circle time' they learn words to describe the weather and name the days of the week. Children look at books for enjoyment, and listen to stories, eagerly anticipating familiar phases. Through the provision of mark-making resources children learn to communicate with marks and pictures, as they draw, chalk and paint. However, children do not always have sufficient mark making resources in the role play area to develop their skills further. Older children are beginning to form recognisable letters as they write their names. Children are encouraged to count, for example, counting how many children are present and the number of bears. Older children are beginning to recognise numbers and use numbers to support their play. For example, children press the numbers on the cash dispenser and use the money to purchase items from the shop. However, older more able children have insufficient opportunities to develop their understanding of calculation and problem solving. Children learn about capacity as they play with the sand and the water and are beginning to use language to describe size, shape and position.

Children are beginning to learn about the world around them. They go on local walks, and explore their surrounding collecting bugs to view under the magnifying glass. Children are fascinated as they observe the effect oil has on water as they learn marbling techniques, and notice colour change as different paints are mixed in water. They learn about the life-cycles handling chicks after they have hatched from the eggs. Children regularly use the computer, consolidating their learning through computer programmes, and they begin to understand the use of technology with equipment such as telephones and the cash dispenser. Children explore a range of media and materials. They have fun as they play with the shaving foam, wet sand and play dough, and make collage picture using different textured materials. Older children differentiate colours with growing confidence. Children enjoy using their imaginations in role play, and take on family roles or those of familiar people in the community. For example, children pretend to wash and style each others hair in the hair dressers, and purchase items from the shop. Children enthusiastically join in their favourite songs, play ring games and dance.

Children make progress towards the early learning goals because staff plan an interesting range of activities across the six areas of learning. A balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities is maintained, and a good daily routine is followed. Staff are continuing to develop their knowledge of the foundation stage, including teaching methods. However, observations are sometimes inconsistent and assessments are not always sufficiently linked to the stepping stones and used effectively to plan what children do next. As a result teaching is sometimes inconsistent and does not always meet the needs of individual children or provide sufficient challenge for older more able children. Staff are caring, friendly and sensitive to the children's needs. They offer reassurance and make good use of praise to motivate and encourage children. This promotes children's confidence and self-esteem. Behaviour is well managed and children respond to firm but gentle reminders. Staff make generally effective use of time and resources which motivate the children and help them make progress towards the early learning goals.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality. Relationships are warm, caring and friendly. This helps children feel settled and promotes their emotional development. Children take an active part in the daily activities and routines of the pre-school. They lay the table for snack, and help put away the toys. This promotes children's independence. Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour and set consistent boundaries which helps children learn to share, take turns and negotiate with others. As a result children generally behave well and are beginning to develop their understanding of right and wrong. Children receive frequent praise and encouragement which promotes their confidence and self-esteem.

Children have good opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, resources, visitors to the nursery and outings to places of interest. For example, they dress up using clothes from other cultures, handle small world figures representing people with disabilities and celebrate various festivals, such as Diwila and the Chinese New Year. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children's care, welfare and development are promoted because relationships with parents are open, trusting, friendly and professional. Information about the pre-school and the activities is available to parents through the prospectus, regular news letters and displays. Policies and procedures are clear and available. Parents' comments are sought and valued, and information is regularly exchanged. This ensures that parental wishes are respected and the individual needs of the children are met.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents' views about their child's needs, interests and abilities are established when children join the pre-school, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. This enables staff to build on what children already know. Staff show parents assessments of their children's progress on a regular basis. Children are encouraged to bring in items to support the theme and 'letter' of the week, and they benefit from the continuation of their learning at home. For example, parents are given ideas about possible activities and how to develop pencil control and letter formation.

Parents speak positively about the staff, the activities and their children's achievements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's safety, care and learning is enhanced by the sound organisation of the pre-school. Space and resources are organised effectively to meet the children's needs. This enables children to move freely between activities and develop their ideas as they play. High staff ratios ensure that children are well supervised and supported during their activities. Children's care and welfare are safeguarded by

clear and well-maintained documentation, including a comprehensive range of policies and procedures. Information is regularly exchanged with parents to ensure continuity of care. The pre-school has recently received accreditation through an endorsed quality assurance scheme.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The manager and staff work well together as a strong, committed team. They regularly reflect on their practice, and have clear aims for the quality of the care and nursery education for the children. However, the quality of teaching is not always sufficiently monitored and evaluated. Good systems are in place for staff recruitment, induction and appraisal. This ensures that the professional development of the staff is promoted. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

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

Not applicable.

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

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection/since 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 by 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 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):

- continue to develop outcomes for younger children by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters'.

#### **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):

- continue to develop staff knowledge of the foundation stage, including teaching methods, to ensure that there is sufficient challenge for older, more able children, and that staff know how to adapt the activities to promote the learning of all children
- continue to ensure that observations and assessments are regularly completed to identify children's achievements, progress and any learning difficulties, and that information gained is used to monitor children's progress against the stepping stones
- continue to develop the use of evaluation to monitor the quality of teaching.

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