



## Highfield Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY306881
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 March 2006
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<b>Registered person</b>	Kingdom Education Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Highfield Pre-School is an independent nursery school run by Kingdom Education Ltd. It opened in its present location in 1999. The setting is located in Harpenden, Hertfordshire. It operates from a single storey building consisting of three classrooms and a separate cloakroom area. All children share access to a secure enclosed play area.

A maximum of 40 children may attend at any one time. It is open each weekday from

09:00 to 15:00 term time only. There are currently 28 children from 2 years 9 months to 4 years 7 months years on roll. Of these 27 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

Highfield Pre-School employs four staff. All of the staff, including the Headteacher, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting achieved re-accreditation of the Hertfordshire Quality Standard in May 2005.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is satisfactory promoted as staff follow sound hygiene procedures which are monitored to ensure that they are carried out. For example, coloured coded cloths are used for cleaning different areas of the nursery and tick lists in the kitchen ensure that food surfaces are cleaned daily. Staff wear disposal gloves when dealing with body fluids however, the importance of doing this is not fully understood by volunteer helpers. The toilets are well stocked with soap dispensers and toilet paper, although communal towels are used. Staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications and the first aid kit is replenished on a regular basis.

Children learn about simple good health and hygiene practices as there are appropriate activities in place that supports this. Children are involved in carrying out simple chores such as wiping down tables before snack which reinforces their understanding of hygiene.

Children are well nourished as staff are aware of what constitutes a balance diet. Children are offered mid-morning snacks that consist of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as breads from other cultures. This widens their tastes. Water is freely available for children who are also encouraged by staff to have a mid afternoon 'top up' drink. Children eat healthy packed lunches provided by their parents, sitting with staff at tables. As a result, children are introduced to healthy eating which promotes their health and well-being.

Children who need to rest during the day can do so as one of the classrooms has a comfortable sofa. Classrooms are centrally heated. However, there is no system in place to monitor room temperature which means that children are not adequately protected from the effects of sudden drops in temperature.

Children's physical development is very well fostered. Children use the spacious and well equipped garden on a daily basis. There are sufficient toys for children to use. Staff use a timer to ensure that children do not have lengthy waits to use a popular trike or swing. Planning for the outdoor ensures that activities are varied and includes activities for use indoors when the weather is wet.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe because good procedures are in place, which are conscientiously carried out by staff. All areas of the nursery that the children use are clean and maintained well. Staff are aware of possible hazards to children, as when nettles start to grow in the nursery garden, and prompt action is taken to minimise possible hazard. However, plants and shrubs in the outside area have not been referenced and checked against an appropriate list to ensure that they are safe.

Children are kept secure as the nursery take appropriate precautions. For example, staff supervise the main nursery door at the start and end of the day. Sufficient staff are with the children when outside and on outings.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as appropriate strategies are used by staff to encourage this. For example, children help staff tidy away toys safely and are given stickers to thank them for their help. Toys and resources in most rooms are stored in lightweight drawers and boxes which children can lift easily.

Children are satisfactorily protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. The nursery has a detailed child protection policy, which is shared with its nearby senior school. This is regularly reviewed and updated. However, the parent helper booklet does not make reference to what procedures they should follow if they became concerned. As a result, children's welfare in this area is not fully managed.

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

The provision is good.

Children are appropriately grouped and benefit from having key workers who know their abilities and interests. Children under three are particularly well supported in their learning. They are offered a range of sensory activities that promote their language and understanding of concepts such as classification. During the inspection visit, a 'treasure hunt' activity, whereby children were asked to find 'precious stones' hidden in sand, very well supported the theme of sorting and matching silver and gold objects. The children involved were engrossed and learnt about not only colour, but also texture and material properties. Other planned activities in the nursery are well prepared. However, on the two days of inspection, worksheets offered to children were not sufficiently adapted to offer challenge to more able children.

Children initiate their own play as there are features in the nursery which promote this. For example, the large and well resourced role play area is very well used by the children. Display tables, which are attractive and at child height, are used effectively to support classroom themes, such as learning about fact and fiction books and the properties of honey. Toys in two of the room used by the children are fully accessible to them. This means that children can explore and investigate in a meaningful and pleasurable way.

Children's attitude to learning is good because they are supported by staff members who are knowledgeable about how children learn. Children are engaged in conversation and are encouraged to question. Children's self initiated play is acknowledged by staff to be of importance. Consequently, children play imaginatively, in collaboration with each other and cooperatively.

The outdoor environment is utilised effectively to support children's learning. Staff plan systematically so that equipment is rotated on a regular basis to keep children's interest. Frequent walks to the surrounding woodland are used so that children can observe changes in seasons. Consequently, children are offered a good balance of activities and experiences to enhance their learning.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching is good. Staff plan with reference to the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage to ensure that children are offered a breadth of relevant topics. There are many opportunities for children to acquire new skills and knowledge. Focused teaching periods in particular are used effectively to support themes of the week such as alphabet letters, numbers and shapes. Children benefit from a range of different teaching methods to keep them motivated and on task that range from participation in group activities to one-to-one session with a staff member. Children who are experiencing developmental delay receive outstanding support through the highly effective use by the nursery of Individual Education Plans. These are clear and regularly reviewed which means that targeted support is given at an early stage. However, the needs of more able children, although acknowledged, are not so well met. Subsequently, progression for these children is not fully monitored and taken into account in existing planning procedures.

Children's language and literacy skills are well promoted, including developing their listening skills. Children attentively listen to stories which are skilfully told by staff members. Phonic recognition is introduced and reinforced in a sensitive way, such as when children are attempting to write their name. This is linked with opportunities for children to write for a purpose and practise conventional alphabet scripts. Children use mathematical language confidently and there are sufficient resources, including board games, to promote children's mathematical understanding and application. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is exceptionally well promoted. For example, staff helped children create a colourful 'Children Around the World' wall display. Children have access to a well resourced outside area that promotes physical exercise. In wet weather, contingency planning ensures equipment is made available after lunch for children to use to practise physical skills such as balancing. Children are involved in creative activities such as singing, dancing to music, drawing and painting. Some activities are linked to a current theme, while others are self initiated. At the time of the inspection visit, for example, older children created intricate dances to music using ribbons to add colour and movement. Overall, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

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

The provision is good.

Children behave well and are polite to each other and to staff. They are helped to understand between right and wrong because staff use clear and consistent boundaries to develop this. Staff take time to explain rules to children, such as not running indoors, and why it is important to follow them.

Children develop a sense of belonging as there are many features in the nursery which promote this. For example, there are individual named shoe pouches and coat pegs available for children to store their personal belongings. Children write to friends who have temporarily left the nursery and welcome them back enthusiastically on their return. Children's self confidence and self-esteem is fostered extremely well. Achievement is acknowledged and constantly praised. In addition, staff use a sticker reward system to recognise helpful behaviour, which is very popular with the children.

The nursery is guided by a Christian ethos which staff follow to promote children's social and moral learning and development. This is reflected in the way activities are planned and organised. For example, Bible stories and songs are introduced which the children enjoy. Effective use is made of wall displays, which promote awareness of cultural harmony, which are of interest to children. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are kept fully informed about their children's nursery education and day-to-day events because there is an up-to-date parents' notice board. In addition, staff ask parents to be involved in 'homework' tasks, such as helping children gather a selection of 'precious' objects to bring into nursery, that support nursery topics. This means that parents are able to take an active part in their children's early education.

Children's care and learning is enhanced as staff have built up valuable and close relationships with parents. There are many opportunities for parents to find out about their children's progress and be involved in the life of the nursery. Parents are welcomed into the nursery and many volunteer as parent helpers. The parent information booklet which parent and volunteer helpers are asked to read contains helpful guidelines about how the nursery operates, however, amendment to include information about child protection is required.

Staff make themselves available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. This, combined with a detailed complaints procedure, ensures that any parents' concerns are resolved quickly. However, currently there is no procedure to record written complaints and their outcomes which parents may ask to see. This has an impact on the effectiveness of the existing complaints procedure.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the efficient organisation of the nursery, for example good deployment of staff, parent helpers and volunteers. This means that minimum care standards child-adult ratios are exceeded throughout the day. Alongside this, effective use of auxiliary staff, such as cleaners and maintenance staff, keep the nursery premises well maintained creating a welcoming environment for children and

staff alike. All policies, procedures and records are in place and were available for inspection.

Children are cared for by adults who have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. They work coherently together as a team and know their roles and responsibilities. Professional development is well fostered. Staff, for example, have recently accessed training on 'Birth to three matters' and are enthusiastic about the areas of development it promotes.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. Teaching is rooted in secure knowledge of the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance. Activities and experiences offered to children are broad and well resourced. Staff use a range of teaching methods to help children learn, particularly children who are experiencing developmental delay.

The Headteacher is pro-active and has a clear understanding of what constitutes good childcare practice. She and her staff have created a vibrant nursery environment which both children and their parents enjoy being a part of.

Overall, the needs of children are met.

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

Not applicable

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

There have been no complaints 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:

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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):

- establish procedures that monitor room temperatures
- ensure that a child protection procedure that complies with those of the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) is made available to parents helpers and volunteers
- review information given to parents about how written complaints are dealt with.

### **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):

- ensure that activities are sufficiently adapted to challenge more able children

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