



# Highways at Hamstreet Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	127250
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 March 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Stacey Sangster
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<b>Registered person</b>	Highways at Hamstreet Kindergarten
<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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Highways at Hamstreet Kindergarten opened in 2001 and is managed by a committee.

It operates from a building within the grounds of Hamstreet Primary School. There is one main play-room, cloakroom facilities and a large enclosed play-area outside. The children are also able to use parts of the school building, such as the dining-room.

There are currently 70 children from 2 to 4 years on roll. This includes 20 funded 3 year olds and 31 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs.

The group opens five days a week during term-time. Sessions are from 08:45-15:30; some children attend on a sessional basis.

There are nine staff and a volunteer; some staff members only work over the lunch-time period. All staff except one, are qualified and hold early years qualifications to NVQ 2 or 3. The setting receives support from an early years advisory teacher. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

As a result of the comprehensive holistic approach adopted by the setting, children's health is promoted to a very high standard. For the majority of the day children have free access to an excellent outside play area, where they can participate in physical activities such as riding bikes, climbing, running, jumping and digging in the sand and soil. They are able to tend to the fruit and vegetables they have planted and can access waterproof jumpsuits, wellington boots and umbrellas so that the outside area is used in all weathers. Children know about good hygiene as they routinely wash their hands before eating and after playing outside or using the toilet. Children understand the reasons for hand washing, because the staff talk to the children about what they are doing and why. Older children explain that using soap kills germs and stops you from getting tummy aches. Children are taking increasing responsibility for managing their own hygiene as they progress through the nursery. The children know that exercise is good for them, for instance, they talk about getting strong legs if they practice running.

Children's health is very well safeguarded. The settings policy which excludes children with infectious illnesses from attending and the staff vigilance in maintaining high standards of cleanliness, ensures that they are protected from cross infection. As a result of the high levels of staff that hold first aid qualifications, children receive prompt and appropriate attention in the event of illness or injury. All of the required health records are maintained and staff receive specialist training to administer medication which requires a technical knowledge such as an epi-pen.

Children learn about food and the benefits of healthy eating through meaningful experiences such as cultivating their own vegetable patch and trying home grown foods. They have opportunities to learn about the origins of food, for example, when a local dairy farmer brought a cow and milking equipment in to show children first hand where milk comes from. The setting have made exemplary efforts to ensure that children receive positive messages about healthy eating from nursery to home by involving parents in healthy eating workshops, the production of healthy eating recipe books and cooking activities. Snacks are healthy and nutritious with children selecting from a choice of fruit. Access to drinking water is unrestricted and this

ensures that children do not become thirsty or de-hydrated.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They are encouraged to actively take responsibility for minimising hazards within the setting and to consider their own and each others safety. The outside area has been designed to enable children of all abilities to participate in activities that allow them to take a measured risk in a safe environment, for example climbing and balancing activities, wood work and working with garden tools.

Children are very safety conscious in this setting. When a bead bracelet broke children identified that it was a hazard to one of the children who might eat the beads and worked together quickly without the need for adult intervention to collect them up and remove the hazard. Staff skilfully direct children's attention to hazards which they can assist in reducing, such as toys on the floor, and this reinforces the message that everyone is responsible for safety. Parents, visitors and friends of the nursery are invited to identify concerns or hazards during adult and child workshops to tidy up the garden or redecorate the nursery. The setting actively encourages suggestions to improve safety and this enables anyone who identifies an issue to confidently raise it knowing that staff welcome their comments and act upon them.

The premises are well organised and children benefit from playing in a spacious well organised environment. It allows them to move around and play safely. They have easy and safe access to an excellent range of toys and resources appropriate for their age. Toys and resources are carefully selected to ensure they are suitable for the ages of the children attending.

Staff knowledge of child protection is sound. All staff are aware of the policy to report concerns and have received training in this subject. The children's welfare is paramount and parents are made aware that the setting have a responsibility to share any concerns with social services if they suspect a child is at risk.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children flourish in this nurturing and stimulating environment. Everything is geared towards promoting a happy and challenging environment in which children become competent learners and build on what they already know. Staff promote warm and caring relationships within the setting and encourage children to be helpful and kind towards each other.

Personal independence is very much encouraged with children being given necessary help and support to attempt tasks for themselves. When putting their coats on staff talk children through doing up zips and encourage them to show each other how it is done. The practice of enabling children the time and support to do things for

themselves results in children having high levels of self esteem and the confidence to try new challenges, while not being afraid to ask for help if they need it.

Achievements are celebrated frequently and enthusiastically by staff. Children can be seen to visibly swell with pride when everyone's attention is drawn to their personal accomplishment and this creates an environment that inspires and motivates children extremely well.

The staff take time and effort to get to know the children and their families well. This enables the staff to talk knowledgeably to the children about their past and make meaningful links to stories, activities and discussions. Staff are often able to illustrate with examples of things specific to the children, such as recalling memories of siblings being born, trips abroad or comparing characters in books to friends and families that the children will know.

Staff use their knowledge of the children's different personalities to group them, support them and organise their day so that it meets their individual needs. Key workers monitor their children and younger children are supported with extra cuddles and reassurance as they tire towards the end of the session. Staff are able to meet the children's specific care needs as they obtain good quality information from parents about their children before they start in the group and continue to update this through out the time that the children attend. The children are happy and secure in the setting. They come in enthusiastically, take part in activities eagerly and are cooperative and cheerful throughout the session.

Children's behaviour, on the whole, is excellent. Children are very clear about the way they are expected to behave and staff are highly skilled at intervening at just the right moment to prevent unwanted behaviour from escalating. Children are taught the skills of negotiation and compromise and have a strong sense of justice and what is fair. Children know that staff will support negotiations and have confidence that unfair behaviour will not be permitted. As a result they do not become overly distressed if they need to challenge another child's behaviour, for example, not sharing equipment. Disagreements are quickly and amicably resolved.

#### Nursery Education.

Children's attitudes to learning are immensely positive. They are very inquisitive and constantly ask questions of staff about why things happen and how. They spend their time engaged in purposeful play, appropriately supported by staff who ask open-ended questions and who extend their knowledge by providing them with information in a way, which is meaningful to each child. Children make very good progress in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff combine their sound knowledge of the early learning goals and individual children to provide a program, which meets the needs and interests of all children. The environment is organised to be highly conducive to learning. There is an emphasis on children investigating and exploring exciting ideas, and materials. Staff capture the children imaginations because they provide exciting well planned and inventive activities.

Children were captivated by an activity to look at reflected light. Their anticipation built as the teacher revealed a beautifully beaded box and told them she had something very special to show them. They sat mesmerised as she held up glass crystals and allowed the light to reflect patterns across the children's faces and then allow them to explore looking through them and using coloured films to change the colour of the light. Some of the children continued to talk about what they had seen amongst themselves throughout the day and one noticed the reflected light in the garden from the CD's hanging on the tree proudly linking it to the information she had discovered earlier and pointing it out to her friends.

Assessment is rigorous and linked appropriately to the stepping-stones, giving a clear indication of where each child is in their learning journey. Each child has an individual learning plan. The assessment is used to plan the focus of the activities, identifying what individual children need to do next. This ensures that children access activities, which are of sufficient challenge, as well as having opportunities to consolidate their learning by revisiting information presented in different ways.

All children are included and planned for and staff receive additional guidance from the settings special educational needs co-ordinator when planning activities for children with special needs. There are excellent links with local support agencies and the setting have an excellent range of strategies to assist children with special needs to make very good progress given their starting points. The planning is monitored to ensure that over the year the curriculum is balanced. The playgroup maintain very close links with the primary school that all children move onto and liaise extremely closely with the reception teacher which results in a seamless transition when they move on to school. The nursery assessment is highly valued by the school staff who make good use of the information to provide the children with continuity, and tailor made support.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents compile information when children enter the setting indicating what they are in their learning. Parents receive good quality, clear information about the Foundation Stage and stepping stones including workshops and information about what the setting do to follow the foundation stage curriculum and how this helps the children reach the stepping stones. Parents understand what the educational aims are for their children, and how this relates to their play.

Parents get details of projects and topics children are working on each term and this enables them to join staff in supporting their child's education. They receive specific information about their child's targets and are asked to provide regular observations of things the children have achieved at home, so that this can be used to support the assessment process. This results in a true partnership with parents and staff working together to support the assessment and learning of the child.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual needs are very well met by this setting. As a result of the attention to detail that is given to collecting information about the care needs of

children before they start and the excellent liaison between staff and parents, the staff get to know the children's changing needs and are able to adapt and support the children as they progress emotionally, physically and socially. Equal opportunities are promoted in all areas of the setting. Everyone's contribution is valued and this extends beyond the children to the community, who contribute enormously to the success of the setting.

Staff use their knowledge of the friends and families of the children to solicit help in obtaining specific and specialised equipment, or demonstrate skills and share knowledge which links to topics. Involving adults that have links with the children helps to bring information to life for them in a memorable and meaningful way. Children feel a great ownership of the settings resources and in particular the garden. They can identify parts that they and their family were responsible for creating. They demonstrate pride when parents, grandparents and people they know come in to talk about their jobs, cultural celebrations, or simply join the children on the carpet for rhymes and songs at collection time. Staff ensure that all families are asked to participate in some way be it bringing in a pebble from the beach to make a mosaic or sourcing a boat for the garden. This enables everyone to be able to contribute in some way.

Children with special needs are welcomed and integrated fully into the setting. Very close links with specialist support agencies ensure that the setting receive up to the minute advice on strategies to support children with additional needs and that this is specific to each child. The staff routinely use simple sign language with all children to reinforce messages of praise and give instructions. Children can be seen to use the signing when they talk to each other which provides all of the children with an alternative form of communication and enables children with speech and language problems to understand and be understood by their peers. The setting also use a system of symbols to illustrate the daily routine and as well as this, enabling all children to refer to it to remind them of what will happen next. It provides another communication tool for those with limited language.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The links are incredibly strong and parents play an intrinsic part in the development and achievements of the setting. Parents help to run the setting by joining the committee and are invited to be as involved as they are able to be. The setting and parents have a true partnership, both valuing the part each other play in nurturing and educating the children and providing each other with good quality information to ensure that all involved are working together to support the child.

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered extremely well.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The setting is staffed by an enthusiastic, motivated and well qualified team of childcare professionals. They are committed to ongoing training and this ensures that they are constantly updating their knowledge and keep abreast of changes in

childcare practices and legislation. The staff are dedicated to the enrichment of the lives of the children attending the setting and they have created a truly spectacular environment in which the children's happiness, advancement and welfare is promoted at all times.

Staffing levels are high and staff work tirelessly and consistently to support and nurture the children. The team are very well organised with key workers overseeing the needs of their groups and staff strengths being harnessed and extended to allow them to make progress with their own professional development.

All of the required records are being professionally maintained and help to safeguard the welfare of the staff and children. The records are produced in a way to ensure that they are of maximum benefit in guiding the staff and supporting the children. It is because these records are so detailed and meaningful that they are a significant factor in the transition to school, where they are added to and form an important link in children's early formal education.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. Committee and staff work hand in hand to ensure that the setting continually evolves. The settings capacity to improve is strong. Staff strive for improvement by evaluating and reflecting on their practice. They seek outside help and support from a wide range of specialist agencies and work hard to disseminate their knowledge and ideas to other providers and to parents.

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

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

The setting has made excellent progress in making the improvements highlighted by the last inspection report.

The child protection policy has been expanded and now has a clear reference to the procedures to follow where there are allegations against members of staff and this is shared with parents.

They have also extended the plans that identify and reduce the risks associated with the care of children, including the times when children use the school premises.

### **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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

#### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

##### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

##### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)