



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 130587

DfES Number: 546098

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 31/08/2004
Inspector Name Jill Nugent

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name Head Start Day Nursery
Setting Address 86 High Street
Potters Bar
Hertfordshire
EN6 5AT

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Head Start Day Nursery 3689864

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Head Start Day Nursery
Address 86 High Street
Potters Bar
Hertfordshire
EN6 5AT

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Head Start Day Nursery opened in April 2000. It operates from five rooms in a renovated building, originally a bank, in the High Street in Potters Bar. The nursery serves the local area and wider community.

There are currently 78 children from three months to five years on roll. This includes 20 funded three year olds and nine funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who have English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week all year round. Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:30.

Seventeen full-time staff work with the children. Every member of staff, except one, have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The nursery achieved the Hertfordshire Quality Standards award in 2001 and is due for re-accreditation.

How good is the Day Care?

Head Start Day Nursery provides good quality care for children. The nursery environment is bright and attractive and made especially welcoming with colourful displays of photographs and art work.

The nursery staff are well qualified. Children are organised into five age groups and good staff ratios result in children receiving much individual attention. The rooms are arranged in clearly defined areas and children can move easily between activities. However, the outdoor area is generally under-used. Children enjoy easy access to toys and equipment in all rooms. They show interest in the wide variety of toys available.

The nursery has working policies and procedures in place to promote children's

health and safety. Staff are attentive to safety issues when moving children around the premises. Children's personal hygiene is promoted well and staff take care to keep the nursery clean, but children's snacks are placed directly onto table tops and some snack times lack organisation. Meals are varied and nutritious and staff join children at mealtimes to encourage their social skills.

Staff take care to include all children in planned activities, often by adapting the activity to suit the child. There is a good choice of stimulating activities and the excellent interaction by staff supports children's development in all areas of learning. Children's behaviour is managed well. Staff speak to children in a calm manner and encourage sharing and respect for one another. However, the behaviour policy does not include detail on how to deal with bullying incidents. Staff are aware of child protection issues but there is no written procedure for dealing with allegations against themselves.

Parents receive detailed information about the nursery and are made to feel welcome at all times. Staff ensure that parents wishes are respected and parents appreciate the regular opportunities to discuss their children's development.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last visit, the nursery was asked to ensure that all information about feeds and nappy changes are clearly recorded and shared with parents. Staff have re-designed the format of the contact books for babies so as to include the extra details and have extended the written routine for nappy changing to ensure recording.

What is being done well?

- The nursery's induction procedures are thorough and staff deployment is effective. The nursery's practice of having three supernumerary staff ensures that established and experienced adults are working directly with the children.
- The premises are welcoming for children. A wide range of resources are used to provide creative and fun activities for older children. Young children have good opportunities to explore various different materials and objects using all of their senses.
- The children at the nursery benefit from a stable team of committed staff who have a good understanding of children's needs. They plan balanced daily routines which provide children with opportunities for free choice play and also to participate in adult-led activities.
- There are effective relationships with parents. Information is exchanged through contact books and daily charts and there are annual parents' evenings. The newsletters provide up-to-date information about events at the nursery.

What needs to be improved?

- use of the outdoor area
- organisation and hygiene at snack times
- behaviour and child protection policies

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
4	Review the organisation of opportunities for children to play outdoors.
7	Improve the organisation of snack time, ensuring that good hygiene practices are in place.
11	Review the behaviour policy with reference to bullying.
13	Review the policy with regard to possible allegations against staff.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Head Start Day Nursery is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals within all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff interact effectively and provide an interesting curriculum, which over time reinforces children's development within all six areas. Planned activities link to topics and take account of different groups of children and their development. Staff are using a selection of observation and assessment methods to monitor children's achievement. There are however, frequent use of tick charts and the information gathered is generally not evaluative or informative in tracking the children's individual progress and next steps for learning.

The leadership and management of the nursery is generally good. An effective management system is in place, consisting of the proprietor, general manager, manager and deputy who influence practice and continually strive to improve the provision. Staff continually update their skills and benefit from in-house training. The group also benefits from a committed team of staff, some have been in post for many years and there are plans to continue development and training within the Foundation Stage with new members of staff. The system for staff appraisals is not consistently monitored but is currently under review.

The partnership with parents and carers is generally good. Parents speak highly of the setting. Staff make time to speak to parents on a regular basis. Noticeboards and newsletters provide quality information about the setting and records of children's progress are available for parent's perusal. Limited information is provided to actively involve parents in their child's learning and parents have expressed they would appreciate further information.

What is being done well?

- Children's creative development is promoted effectively through a variety of activities and resources, which enable children to fully explore their senses. Children are enthusiastic to explore creative materials and use these imaginatively.
- Children are secure and happy within their environment. They are confident, know the routines well and interact positively with staff and each other. Children are given many opportunities to develop responsibilities and independence during the daily routines and activities.
- Staff interact well with the children. They prepare a broad range of fun and interesting daily activities. Children are busy and have opportunities to move around and choose activities independently, as well as work in small or large groups.

- Partnership with parents and carers is a strong feature within the provision. Parents express their positive feelings and confidence of the setting. They particularly like the open and friendly relationships, where approachable staff take time to discuss many aspects of the care and activities provided.

What needs to be improved?

- the planning and organisation of ICT, music and physical development
- the system in place to assess children's progress and development
- information for parents to actively involve them in their child's learning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable, as first nursery education inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident to access their environment, selecting resources for themselves. Children's independence skills are developed during many practical activities, especially meal times. Children sit and listen quietly when appropriate, however, at times concentration levels are low, particularly during large group activities, which sometimes inhibit the children's interest and attention. Children are developing positive attitudes towards behaviour, reinforced by good role models.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children interact well with their peers, take turns in conversation and use language to re-tell events and experiences. They are learning their names, labelled on their drawers and when copying their name cards. Children are developing increasing control over tools, which in turn assist with early writing skills. However, missed opportunities exist for the regular promotion and reinforcement of sounds, letters and awareness of rhyming.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children recognise colours, shapes and numbers during a variety of activities. They are developing good matching skills when completing puzzles and preparing cutlery for lunch, and can identify how many more knives are needed to lay the table. There are limited opportunities during practical activities to extend the children's experiences and knowledge of problem solving, calculating and comparing.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children explore a variety of resources using their senses. Opportunities exist for children to utilise materials to join, build, assemble and shape. A range of equipment is available which reflect positive images. Resources are available to promote ICT skills, however, the organisation and regular access of the computer is insufficient to support the children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Good provision is provided to enable children to handle tools, materials and equipment, developing hand-eye co-ordination. Children can jump with two feet through hoops and make large arm movements with ribbons. Children carefully move around their environment. The outside play area is not utilised to its full potential. Staff provide a limited choice of physical activities and opportunities for climbing and balancing are not regularly promoted.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children regularly explore textures of paint, playdough, water and sand. Interesting activities ensure many opportunities exist for children to respond in a variety of ways to what they hear, see, smell and touch. Staff display the children's work attractively to celebrate their work and learning. There are missed opportunities throughout daily routines to reinforce music, singing, sounds and rhymes.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- improve the planning and use of resources, to ensure children have full access to the range on offer, this particularly refers to the computer, music opportunities and physical play equipment
- develop the use of assessment, to evaluate children's progress and development and enable children to extend their learning towards the early learning goals
- increase opportunities for parents to be actively involved in their child's learning.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.