

Homesteaders Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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650074

Inspection date

24/02/2011

Inspector

Lynn Smith

Setting address

The Homestead, Sudbury Road, Gestingthorpe, Halstead,
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Telephone number

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Homesteaders Day Nursery was registered over 20 years ago and is privately owned and run. It operates from a converted section of the owners rural home in Gestingthorpe. The securely enclosed garden is used for outdoor activities. The nursery is open from 8am to 6pm five days a week, for 50 weeks of the year, closing over the Christmas period.

A maximum of 10 children under eight years may attend the nursery at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 21 children on roll. The setting has strategies in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who are learning English as an additional language. Care is also offered to children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and also the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Five members of staff are employed. All of whom hold relevant qualifications to at least level 2.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children's welfare, learning and development needs are met to a satisfactory standard. Staff create a welcoming and relaxed environment in which children freely explore their surroundings. The setting is beginning to embrace the changes introduced through the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are limited systems in place at present for staff to develop effective links with other settings. The provision has very informal procedures of reviewing and evaluating the working practices, resulting in a lack of ambition and few plans for the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- update the complaints procedure to include the correct telephone number for Ofsted.
- improve the organisation of the setting by developing the use of self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- develop the opportunities for partnership working where children receive care and education in more than one setting
- improve the use of observational assessment to plan to meet children's individual needs and to provide experiences appropriate to each child's stage of development as they progress towards the early learning goals.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are appropriately safeguarded as staff demonstrate accurate knowledge of their responsibilities with regards to protecting children. Two staff have had recent safeguarding training and have cascaded their learning to the other staff. All adults are appropriately checked and vetted and proof of their clearance is held on file. There is a written safeguarding policy available for staff to use. The nursery environment is regularly checked for safety to ensure that children play and learn safely.

The setting operates under the leadership of the owner who leads a team of four staff. Two staff have recently completed relevant training and there is a commitment within the provision to further train and develop staff's knowledge of current practices. There is limited evidence to show that the leadership embeds ambition within the workforce or strives for improvement as there are currently few systems in place for reviewing and evaluating the setting. The staff team is small and communicate verbally on a daily basis which enables them to evaluate the effectiveness of activities and working practices, however, these discussions and any changes created through them are not documented or evidence to show their effectiveness.

Children have a large amount of toys and play resources to choose from, which are mostly stored in low-level storage or cardboard boxes within the two playrooms. Some of the boxes contain huge amounts of equipment, such as, construction toys which potentially inhibits their ability to freely self-select the resources. The setting has an equality and diversity policy in place and promotes children's understanding of other people's cultures and differing needs through discussion, appropriate resources and the celebration of festivals and special occasions.

The provision has some systems in place for working in partnership with other settings, however, these are limited. Links with other settings which children attend are generally formed through verbal communication between the staff and parents, but no further procedures have been implemented to enable effective communication and the sharing of children's learning and progress. The setting has some links with outside agencies, such as, the local authority Transition Officer. Parents are provided with basic information about the nursery and it's working practices. Most communication is shared verbally when the parents drop or collect their children. Notice boards contain some relevant information for parents, however, these are very busy and overcrowded and contain some old and out-of-date information.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are actively engaged in play throughout their day. They confidently move around the setting freely accessing toys and play materials of their choice. They enjoy adult company and excitedly listen to a story read by a member of staff.

They have fun playing outdoors in the large garden which surrounds the setting. They access a good amount of large scale play equipment, such as, swings, see-saws and climbing frames. They interact with the chickens who wander freely around the setting and take bread out to feed them each day. Children are occasionally taken for a walk to a local farm to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff are developing a system for observing children's play. Their observations are recorded in the children's learning journeys with some photographic evidence to support their comments. At present, however, this system does not link the observations to a specific area of learning and does not show how staff use the system to identify children's next steps in learning.

Children are safe and secure within the provision and demonstrate that they feel safe by confidently accessing all areas of the premises. They approach staff with ease and enjoy their company. They show little concern when strangers are present as staff introduce the visitor and reassure the children of the reason for their visit. Children develop a good understanding about healthy habits, such as, hand washing. Staff vigilantly encourage them to wash their hands every time they return to the building from the garden as the setting has a number of free roaming chickens and a goose. Children sit together to eat meals and packed lunches provided by their parents. They are provided with water or juice throughout the day. Children have daily opportunities to access fresh air and exercise when they play in the large garden.

Children are settled and content within the setting and demonstrate a sense of belonging as they place their coats and bags on their designated peg. They part from parents and carers appropriately and quickly become engaged in play with their friends. Children are provided with some opportunities to participate in activities which promote their knowledge of the wider world and visitors occasionally come in to the setting to share their expertise and knowledge. A range of activities enable children to develop skills for the future, for example, they are provided with free access to a selection of mark making resources, enabling them to practise drawing and pre-writing skills. They communicate verbally, participating in discussions which reflect real and imaginary experiences. Children participate in role play and dressing up. They have fun climbing in and out of a large cardboard box which is now their den and are encouraged to use the den in whichever way they choose.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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