

Homesteaders Day Nursery

The Homestead, Sudbury Road, Gestingthorpe, Halstead, Essex, CO9 3BL



Inspection date	10 February 2015
Previous inspection date	24 February 2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Good	2
The setting meets legal requirements for early years settings			

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The quality of teaching is good. Children enjoy a variety of well-planned activities that reflect their interests and meet their needs.
- Staff monitor children's development well. They accurately identify their next steps in learning and effectively incorporate these into planning.
- The rural outdoor area is used exceptionally well to inspire children to investigate nature, develop their exploratory skills and take part in a wide variety of physical activities.
- Staff protect children because they demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and are confident in their ability to implement them effectively. Children are closely supervised and risk assessment is undertaken to keep children safe as they play, both inside and outdoors.
- Staff act as positive role models as they effectively manage children's behaviour and talk about the importance of safety throughout children's activities.
- Effective links exist with local schools to promote smooth transitions and continuity in children's learning and development.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Children do not always have easy access to a wide range of art and craft resources that encourage them to explore and try out their own creative ideas.
- The provider does not always promptly inform parents when there are changes to the nursery's policies and procedures.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- enhance opportunities for children to incorporate more of their own ideas during adult-led art and craft activities, for example, by making additional creative materials more easily accessible to children
- enhance the already good partnership with parents to ensure that it is even more highly effective in helping staff meet children's needs and promote their well-being; for example, by reviewing the way that information is shared with parents to ensure they are promptly informed when there are revisions to the nursery's policies and procedures.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the provider.
- The inspector held discussions with the provider, staff, children and local authority adviser.
- The inspector viewed a sample of the children's development records.
- The inspector saw evidence of the suitability and qualifications of the staff, self-evaluation, risk assessment and policies and procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day and from their responses to surveys organised by the nursery.

Inspector

Patricia Champion

Inspection findings

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good

Children are enthusiastically developing the skills they need in readiness for starting school. They develop literacy skills as they link sounds to letters, practise pencil control and recognise and write words familiar to them. Children develop a love of books and listen attentively to stories, as they snuggle up to staff in cosy spaces. They have very good opportunities to use numbers in games, both indoors and outside. The staff's interaction with the children is very positive. They spend their time directly playing with the children and provide relaxed opportunities for spoken language by chatting about activities, asking questions, waiting for responses and allowing children time to initiate conversations. Children enjoy using their imagination as they create puppet shows or act out role-play scenarios. However, sometimes creative learning experiences tend to be overly adult-led because children do not have easy access to additional art materials and resources, to express their own ideas and produce original pieces of work. Key persons get to know the children exceptionally well. Parents regularly receive written summaries of the good progress their children are making. In turn, this encourages parents to share milestones they have observed at home.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is good

Staff successfully provide a warm environment where children form secure emotional attachments. The indoor learning environment is part way through refurbishment and staff have made extra effort to make it bright and attractive, with many displays depicting examples of the children's work. Children get plenty of support from their key persons due to the low number of children currently attending. This means that children, who tend to be shy, thrive and rapidly develop their confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Children follow good hygiene routines. They are able to tend to their own toileting needs and staff encourage children to dress independently when changing to play outside.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is good

The provider and staff have a good understanding of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are very receptive to advice, suggestions and training from the local authority advisers. As a result, the recommendations from the last inspection have successfully been addressed. Self-evaluation is used well to identify areas for further development and regular supervision meetings and appraisals ensure that staff continue their professional development. All the essential documentation that promotes children's welfare and safety is readily available for inspection. The most important information is displayed in prominent positions for parents to view. However, there is potential for misunderstanding, as not all the recent changes to the policies and procedures have been shared with parents. This means the opportunities to work in partnership with parents to constantly support children's needs and well-being are not fully maximised. Nevertheless, parents have regular opportunities to share their views and they say they are delighted with the standard of care and education their children receive.

Setting details

Unique reference number	650074
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	877289
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	10
Number of children on roll	5
Name of provider	Susan Aitken
Date of previous inspection	24 February 2011
Telephone number	01787 460255

Homesteaders Day Nursery was registered in 1993, and is privately owned and managed. The nursery employs three members of childcare staff. Of these, two staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, for 50 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 8am until 6pm. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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