



Heathcote House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY232048
Inspection date	10 May 2006
Inspector	Rachel Edwards
Setting Address	The Green, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 5AA
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Registered person	Partnership of Keith and Jean Hudson
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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?

Heathcote House Nursery is a privately owned nursery situated in Devizes. It operates from a house, which has been adapted to cater for children aged three months to five years. The baby unit has two rooms dedicated to play and a further two rooms for rest and play activities. The main nursery has a large play room, a quiet room for more advanced teaching activities and a smaller play room for the younger children. There is a fully equipped kitchen, where meals are prepared for the

children and suitable toilet and wash facilities, as well as a staff room. There is a fully enclosed garden for outdoor play.

The nursery is registered to care for no more than 63 children, aged three months to five years. There are currently 58 children on roll, of whom 22 receive funding for nursery education. The nursery is open all year round except for a week at Christmas and Bank Holidays, from 08.00 to 18.00 hours. Eleven staff, including the manager who is a qualified teacher, work with the children. Of the remaining staff, all but one have relevant child care qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The nursery provides a clean, bright and welcoming environment for children. Staff follow effective procedures to help protect children from illness and infection. For example, nappies are changed in a hygienic way to avoid cross contamination between children or staff. Care is taken to ensure children never share bedding, cups or dummies. Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene and staff clearly explain about the danger of germs, as they supervise children washing their hands after the toilet and before eating. Tissues and bins are within children's reach, to encourage independence in their personal care.

Children enjoy and benefit from the range of healthy and nutritious snacks and meals, which are freshly prepared on the premises by the staff and nursery cook. Individual dietary needs are well met and there are effective procedures in place, to ensure all adults are aware of children's allergies and steps are taken to avoid contact with problem foods. Children eat meals sitting together at tables, with the babies together in their own room. Children chat together as they eat and this relaxed social environment encourages them to eat well and enjoy meal times. Drinking water is available to all children at all times; babies are offered regular drinks and older children are able to help themselves and this is beneficial to their health and well being.

Children are encouraged to be physically active throughout the day. All groups of children go into the attractive nursery garden at least twice each day. Here they have room to run freely, climb, balance and explore. They enjoy jumping between logs and crawling through the woody area. Interesting mobiles and bells hanging from the trees, add extra interest and enjoyment. Staff also frequently take children for walks in the locality, for example, to feed the ducks or to play in a nearby park with a wide selection of suitable large play equipment. These enjoyable experiences help children to develop a positive attitude to physical activity and to make good progress in their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a generally safe environment where most hazards have been identified through routine risk assessments, however, steps have not always been taken to minimise the risks to children. Generally, staff follow good procedures to protect children and help them to keep themselves safe. For example, indoors, hazardous materials are inaccessible to children, safety gates prevent children accessing the stairs and staff are effectively deployed indoors to support children's care and development. In the baby unit, staff are vigilant in ensuring children are sleeping in a safe environment and regularly checked. Emergency evacuation drills are regularly practised. However, staff are not clear about the procedures to follow if the two year olds were asleep in different rooms. This could cause a delay in getting children to safety in an emergency. The nappy changing area for two-year-olds is against a window with unprotected glass, which poses a risk to children. Gas and electrical appliances are not routinely serviced nor tested, so that their safety cannot be confirmed. In the garden there are a number of poisonous plants where children play, frequently unseen by staff. Whilst the owner is aware of the plants, staff are generally not aware that some of the plants in the garden pose a risk to children's health.

Children are starting to share responsibility for their own safety through practical activities, including road safety whilst on walks, taking part in emergency evacuation drills and tidying away toys, to prevent trip hazards. Children move around the provision confidently and safely.

Children throughout the nursery enjoy helping themselves to clean, well-maintained toys that are stored on low-level shelving units. Such free choice opportunities help children to build their self-confidence and sense of belonging within the provision. They benefit from the staff's good understanding of safety issues concerning the purchase and maintenance of equipment. As a result, children are able to play with safe, stimulating, age appropriate toys that help to support their learning and development.

Children's well-being is supported by staff that have a sound understanding of child protection issues, confidentiality and the correct procedures to be followed if concerned about a child. There are appropriate arrangements for making parents aware of the provider's responsibilities. As a result, children's welfare is satisfactorily protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Most children enter the nursery happily and separate easily from their parents or carers. They cheerfully greet friends and staff and settle quickly to play. Staff are warm and caring towards the children. Staff use their good knowledge of early years guidance, such as the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum, to plan a wide range of stimulating, enjoyable and worthwhile activities for all the children. The baby rooms are cosy and attractive, with comfortable domestic furniture to help children's mobility and allow staff to snuggle up with children, for example when bottle feeding or sharing books. The consistent staffing helps children

build warm and trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. For example, when changing nappies, staff tickle, chat and sing to the children, which makes them feel happy and secure.

Children develop good social skills. They become aware of others' needs and learn to play co-operatively. For example, a two year old offers her truck when she notices a friend is upset, he smiles and thanks her. As children progress through the nursery, they are able to concentrate for longer periods, such as at story time or carefully painting over wax crayon drawings. Children become increasingly independent in their personal skills, for example, older children use the toilet and wash hands with little help, and pour their own drinks at snack time. All children are well supported by staff as they learn to use cutlery at meal times.

Throughout the nursery, staff monitor children's development, they note children's achievements and record their progress. They effectively use this information to plan activities that offer sufficient challenge, and help individuals move on to the next stage in their learning and development. Staff are committed to providing good quality care and they make extra efforts to give children exciting and interesting experiences, such as by organising regular outings or visitors to the nursery.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The manager and staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage. All staff are involved in planning the curriculum and this ensures that they are clear about what children are intended to learn from activities. The manager is a qualified teacher and is active in developing her staff's understanding of how children learn. She is responsible for teaching the group of children who will be going on to school in the following September. During these smaller group sessions, the children are well challenged and make very good progress towards the early learning goals. For example, they practise writing their names and play number games, which help them develop an understanding of mathematical ideas.

Children speak confidently and clearly within the group, telling others about what they have been doing and important events at home. They are very interested in the visiting police officer, listen attentively to him and then ask a range of probing questions, does he have a dog? Has he been on a helicopter? How does he let bad people out of the handcuffs? They develop early writing skills, for example by making marks in the sand or painting water outside with big brushes. Older children practise writing their names and other letters. Whilst writing materials are available to children in the main playroom, not all children are aware of the resources that are there, nor are they sufficiently encouraged to use them to write for a purpose. For example, by naming their own work or routinely using them in the role play area.

Children count well and use mathematical language and ideas within their play. For example, whilst building a tower, a four-year-old exclaims: "look, it's as big as me, let's put two more bricks on". Children have many opportunities to learn about their local environment and community. They use the nursery garden to hunt for bugs or study plants growing. A group of children walk into the town to buy cameras and photograph blossom on the way back. These first hand, practical experiences help

children learn in an enjoyable and meaningful way. Children have many opportunities to express themselves creatively. They become absorbed as they paint freely, experimenting with colour, making collages or modelling with dough. They develop their imagination well through role play and respond to music, moving in time or singing enthusiastically.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and valued as individuals. For example, dietary needs and parents' wishes are always accommodated and children's needs for sleep or rest are respected. Throughout the nursery, children have access to a range of resources, such as dressing up clothes, dolls and books that help them develop a positive attitude to diversity.

Children behave very well. The staff are excellent role models, treating each other and children with respect and kindness. They support children well, as they learn to share and take turns and warmly praise children when they show acts of kindness or good behaviour. Children learn to respect other's needs, for example by not disturbing a sleeping child or by gently handling insects they find in the garden. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are welcomed into the nursery and their contributions are valued. There are daily opportunities for discussion about children's care and parents receive a daily report of the care and activities their child has experienced. They are kept up to date with information about the nursery and related topics, through an informative notice board and regular newsletters. Parents may see their child's developmental assessment records at any time and staff value their comments on these. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning, through activities such as bringing in articles from home linked to the topic and for suggestions for activities to be carried out at home, that reinforce learning in the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and development is supported by staff who are suitable, have relevant experience and are well qualified in caring for young children. The manager works closely with her staff, who work well as a team. The consistent staffing and clear daily routine help children settle and feel secure. The nursery makes time for children of different ages to come together at various periods of the day, where they benefit from interacting with one another. Children's arrival and departure times are not always promptly recorded, so there is not an accurate record of attendance at all times, which puts children's safety and well-being at risk. All other required documentation is in place, easily accessible and stored confidentially. The nursery has undertaken the Bristol Standard quality assurance scheme, which has led to them looking closely at the quality of care they provide and developing areas of good

practice. The nursery owner has not been pro-active in taking steps to minimise all the dangers to children, identified in the regular risk assessments.

The leadership and management are good. The manager is a qualified teacher and is a very good role model for staff in the pre-school rooms. All staff in these rooms are involved in planning the curriculum and assessing children's progress, which contributes to their good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. The nursery is aware of its strengths and areas for development in providing funded nursery education. The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the nursery was asked to record the arrival and departure times of all children and visitors; to ensure there are suitable procedures in place for outings; to ensure that electrical equipment is tested regularly and to ensure parents acknowledge any medication given to children. For nursery education, there were no significant weaknesses to report, but the nursery was asked to consider allowing children to put out their own activities in the morning and to explore ways in which parents can add to children's written assessments.

The daily attendance register is still not always promptly completed, so that there is not an accurate record of who is present at all times. This could be detrimental to children's well being, for example if there were an emergency evacuation. Staff now follow clear and safe procedures when taking children off the premises. Gas and electrical appliances have not been recently or routinely tested or serviced, which means that their safety cannot be assured. Parents now sign the medication record to acknowledge any medication given, which is beneficial to children's health.

Most activities are put out by staff for children in the morning. However, children are free to choose other activities from the shelves if they wish. This helps them develop their independence and allows them to follow their own interests. More encouragement for them to do this would further benefit their development. Staff discuss children's assessment records with parents on a regular basis, but as yet do not contribute to these in writing.

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.

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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):

- ensure that any poisonous plants are removed or made inaccessible to children
- ensure that children's arrival and departure times are promptly recorded so that there is an accurate record of who is present at all times
- ensure that gas and electrical appliances conform to safety requirements and do not pose a hazard to children
- ensure glass adjacent to the nappy changing area is not a hazard to children

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):

- enable all children to develop early writing skills during everyday play by encouraging them to make meaningful marks such as attempting to name their own work or 'writing' in the role play area

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