

Horn End Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY217093
Inspection date	02 October 2007
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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 good. 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?

Horn End Nursery opened in 2002 and is one of three nurseries run by the proprietor. It operates in a single storey building situated close to the centre of Stafford, Staffordshire. A maximum of 59 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.00 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 110 children aged from six months to three years on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and wider areas. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 18 members of staff. Of these, 17 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

All children have frequent regular opportunities for play and activities in the outside area during the day. The staff ensure toddlers and pre-school children play outside at least twice a day. Babies are taken out in their pushchairs at least once a day and as often as their individual routines allow. The children use wheeled toys, slides and climbing equipment. This ensures the development of their physical skills and access to fresh air.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through planned routines and procedures. Older children know, for example, that they have to wash their hands before food and after using the toilet. They said 'germs get on your hands and make them poorly'. Staff follow effective procedures such as routinely cleaning the tables with anti-bacterial spray before food and practising the clear procedures for managing sick and infectious children to prevent the spread of infection. However, at snack times the staff in the Toby Tall room do not always ensure that the pre-school children follow food hygiene guidelines when serving biscuits to each other. This has the potential to expose the children to cross-contamination.

Children benefit from a healthy diet, they have a variety of balanced meals prepared from fresh ingredients by the cook in the refurbished nursery kitchen. Fresh water or juice is freely available to the toddlers and pre-school children in their own cups and babies have their own individual bottles. Staff ensure children under 12 months follow their individual feeding routines as discussed with parents. All dietary and health requirements are recorded on children's individual record forms. This helps to ensure children remain healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The outside play area is secure and provides children with an exciting safe space to run, use wheeled toys and climb. The area is accessed from three playrooms and children have a choice of equipment and activities. Premises checks are undertaken regularly to maintain the safety and security of the nursery. The main entrance door is monitored with a closed circuit camera system and an entry button pad. Camera monitors are situated in the hall and office and also show the children's rooms.

Staff ensure they maintain an accurate record of visitors' attendance. Children are cared for in an organised environment where risks are limited through effective procedures and risk assessments. Fire fighting equipment is well maintained and checked. Children practise fire drills and emergency evacuation every four to six weeks. This means that children will be safe in an emergency situation.

Children use a range of high quality, safe, developmentally appropriate resources. These are well maintained and presented by staff to enable children to choose from the varied range stored at low level. Staff consistently explain safe practices to the children, such as lining-up to go outside, ensuring babies and toddlers are securely strapped into chairs and pushchairs and wearing fluorescent jackets when out walking.

Children are well protected by staff who have a good understanding of child protection issues and follow the correct procedures to record existing injuries and report concerns to the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and relaxed in the nursery's welcoming, caring environment. They have positive relationships with staff. Children play happily together using resources such as sensory toys, books, a home corner and art materials suitable to their age and stage of development. All children enjoy exploration with glue, paint, water and sand, which helps them represent their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. Staff are actively involved with the children, for example, they sit on the floor to be actively engaged in the children's play. Children are frequently cuddled and praised. Other older children play together or companionably with staff.

The nursery makes effective use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and provide a range of stimulating and appropriate activities for children under three years. The children's development of communication and language is particularly well promoted by staff through constant conversation, questions, individual attention and sign language. Staff sit with children to talk about their toys and books and prompt them to say 'what happens next' as they listen and interact to their story 'Underwater farmyard'. Children and staff sing together, children choose their songs such as 'If you're happy and you know it' and enthusiastically use gestures and movement to illustrate the words. Children smile and laugh as they congratulate each other's singing with applause. Consequently, children are developing their communication skills very well and are able to express their needs.

The daily timetables ensure that mobile children spend periods of time outside in the play area where they play and climb on specialised large fixed equipment such as a slide and activity climbing frame. Infants are taken out in their pushchairs either in the outside play area or on walks. However, children in the Baby Small room are not always provided with a calm atmosphere to facilitate their sleep and rest periods.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff team have developed and increased their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan and provide a varied range of activities under each area of learning. The learning intention is recorded and relates to the stepping stones and early learning goals so that all aspects are covered. Staff have developed the practice of recording their observations on the children's progress and the 'memory maker' records clearly show children's attitude to learning to provide a complete picture of achievements. Continuous monitoring procedures ensure staff maintain high standards of teaching and enables staff to make accurate progress reports to parents.

Staff record the next steps for each child's level of future development and the verbal evaluation of activities and teaching methods are developing to show the impact of planned activities and daily routines on the children and used to inform future planning.

Staff use effective methods to maintain children's interest by asking understandable questions and encouraging children to choose their activities. Plans are flexible and allow staff to spend the majority of their time working directly with the children. The children are split into two groups and have a key worker which ensures they have opportunities for one to one attention and conversations. However, during some of the times when children are in one large group, for example story time, the younger children are not fully engaged and become restless whilst older children dominate the conversation and interaction.

Children are clear about the purpose of planned activities and frequently join in with their own ideas and home experiences. Development is good in all six areas of learning but particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy and physical development because the children are in small groups and staff allow time for children to engage with each other and staff in individual conversations. The children benefit from frequent periods of outdoor play in the extensive well-planned outdoor area where they use a wide range of large outdoor toys and equipment.

Behaviour is well managed by consistent methods. For example, children are encouraged to understand the behaviour boundaries and respond to staff with 'please' and 'thank you' and praise each other's achievements. Children are also encouraged to help each other and staff to tidy resources away. This results in an ordered caring environment for children.

Children show a sense of belonging and are motivated to learn. They are friendly and confident to try new activities and speak in a familiar group. Children behave well and show care and concern for each other. For example, older children help younger children to make tall towers of bricks and ensure that only four children at a time play in the hospital. They are encouraged to develop their personal independence by managing their clothing when visiting the toilets. Daily routine opportunities such as meal and snack times are used to encourage children to serve their own food and pour drinks.

Children make recognisable letters on paper and identify labels of their own and each other's names and resources. They write notes to each other and say 'you're going to the doctors today' as they play together in the role play area. Children have very well developed skills to speak clearly and select books for pleasure. They clearly answer with 'good morning' as their names are called and tell each other stories and discuss their favourite books. They join in with rhymes and songs and use descriptive language and gestures to express themselves.

Children discover the living world as they use natural materials such as corks, nuts, fir cones and driftwood to model and create collages. Children know how to use computers as they practise mouse control and interact with games and programmes. They learn about other cultures and customs such as Chinese New Year and about India as they taste food and dress-up to celebrate weddings. They broaden their understanding of the wider world and environment as they enjoy visits to the supermarket and a local charity shop to deliver a donation. Visitors to the nursery such as a midwife help bring their current topic on 'Babies' alive.

Children are developing an understanding and are using numbers. They are progressing with problem solving using addition and comparisons with mathematical language whilst counting meaningfully up to 10 and using their fingers to represent numbers. They clearly explain why the big doll cannot wear the little doll's clothes. Children experience weighing and measuring with interesting resources and balancing scales during planned activities. They demonstrate that they have a good understanding of shape and size as they identify shapes such as triangle, square and rectangle.

Children discuss health and hygiene whilst playing in the hospital. They explain that they put on the rubber gloves 'cos of the blood'. Children use small tools such as scissors, rollers, spatulas and construction materials with increasing control. They routinely go out for walks and use large physical equipment to travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment to develop their physical skills in the outside play area.

Children express themselves through creative activities and role play. For example, playing together in the hospital, bandaging arms and checking ears. Children know and identify colours as they compare the colours of paint and shapes. They use various materials to make and display large collages of their current topics. Children sing songs and enjoy regular music and movement sessions with a visiting specialist. They dress-up and become a favourite story character and fairies.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy close relationships with the staff and each other. They are valued and respected as individuals, their confidence and self-esteem is developed by staff with use of praise and encouragement on arrival and during their play throughout the day. Staff ensure that resources positively represent the children who attend, as well as individuals from the wider community. Children celebrate other nations' festivals and customs as they make Diwalhi cards and paint their hands with henna dye. They have various visitors such as an ambulance, animals and a midwife to increase their knowledge of the wider community and to help raise children's awareness of diversity in their community and develop a positive attitude to others. Children are aware of various feelings and are developing a sense of humour. They make each other laugh by using the disposable potties in the hospital area as hats. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well, they take turns and share. Staff encourage the children to help tidy the toys away, they teach the children how to return toys to the correct container. Children are enthusiastic and take a pride in helping and staff reward them with verbal praise, clapping, stickers and being a special helper.

The nursery has good access and operates on ground floor level. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and specific language requirements are fully included and supported because senior staff have formulated a system to offer appropriate support and ensure the policies and procedures promote inclusion for all children. Staff work closely with fellow professionals and parents.

All children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents and carers. The individual routines and preferences are discussed and recorded which means that staff are aware of all the children's care needs.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is outstanding. They are made aware of how the setting operates in a detailed prospectus. They are informed of topics and operational changes verbally and in regular newsletters. Staff regularly send electronic mail and pictures of their children to parents. Parents are invited to send resources such as 'scan' pictures of their children to help with their topic on babies. In addition, parents and carers are invited to 'stay and play days'. This ensures parents are involved in their children's education. Staff maintain 'memory maker' development records on the progress of the children which parents can see at any time. Children's health and dietary needs are discussed and recorded. Verbal exchange of progress every day keeps parents informed of their child's well-being and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

In the summer of 2007 the nursery was extensively flooded and moved to temporary accommodation. During this time the nursery maintained the continuity of care for the children and their families and eventually moved back to the premises in September. The building has been refurbished to a high standard. All resources and furniture have been replaced from high quality specialist nursery equipment suppliers. The management and staff team have worked hard to settle children back into the premises and continue to be dedicated to providing good quality care for the children.

The nursery has robust recruitment methods to ensure staff are appropriately checked, vetted and qualified. The proprietor and manager have developed procedures to ensure there is an efficient system in place to ensure the continued suitability of staff to care for children.

All children's records and staff details are stored securely and available for inspection, although some archived records were lost in the flood. Staff attend training on a rolling programme and are continually increasing their understanding of children's development and knowledge of appropriate activities. Staff are experienced and knowledgeable and ensure most children's individual needs are met.

The leadership and management of early education is good. The staff team have attended training on the Foundation Stage to increase their knowledge of the stepping stones and the early learning goals. They are confident and have established their own methods of recording and evaluating children's progress. Staff have regular meetings to share and discuss good practice and further develop their knowledge and understanding of planning and how children learn. Children in receipt of funding for early education are steadily achieving and progressing because the teaching methods are effective.

The staff team work well together and are continually striving to perfect appropriate policies, procedures and practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. There are clear systems in place for recording accidents and medication. Staff and children's attendance records clearly show the actual arrival and departure times and the rooms which staff work in. However staff to child ratios in the Baby Thumbs room are sometimes compromised as children prepare to move up and visit other rooms.

All documentation is meticulously maintained, up to date and regularly reviewed to reflect the progressive improvement of the operational practice. The staff team work well together to plan and provide children with exciting innovative experiences to enhance their development and progress. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to provide an action plan that demonstrates how risk assessment arrangements will ensure all potential hazards are identified and minimised; to ensure that the child protection procedure for the nursery complies with local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures; and to devise a statement of procedure to be followed if a child is lost.

The management team have reviewed and implemented new policies and procedures to address the recommendations. The child protection procedures have been brought up to date and

reflect the new local arrangements. The security procedures have been improved as part of the refurbishment and ensure the nursery is secure.

At the last early education inspection the provider was asked to further develop the range of opportunities for children to write for different purposes. The senior staff in the Toby Tall pre-school room have provided a writing table where various types of writing materials and paper is freely available at all times.

These improvements ensure the quality of care and early education are now of a good or outstanding standard throughout the nursery.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- make sure staff follow food hygiene guidance when serving snacks to children in the Toby Tall room
- review the organisation in the Baby Small room to provide a calm environment for sleeping babies
- ensure the numbers of registered children under two years are followed at all times.

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):

- review and evaluate large group times so that all children are engaged and progress according to their age and stages of development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk