

Hickling Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253426
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Inspector	Alexandra Brouder
Setting Address	c/o Hickling Village Hall, Main Street, Hickling, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE14 3AQ
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Registered person	Hickling Pre-School Committee
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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?

Hickling Pre-School opened in 1967. It operates from the main hall of the local village hall. There is also access to a kitchen, toilets and a small, enclosed outdoor playground, which is adjacent to the building. The group serves families from Hickling and the surrounding villages.

The pre-school is open Monday to Friday 9.30-12.00, term time only. On Wednesdays the pre-school offers a rising five session. Children attend a variety of sessions.

There are currently 29 children from two years of age, to five years of age attending the pre-school. This includes 23 three and four-year-olds. No children attending the pre-school have special needs, or have English as an additional language.

Seven staff work with the children. Four of these have early years qualifications. Hickling Pre-School are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receive support through the Nottinghamshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health needs are met well. Their skills in personal hygiene develop, as they know to wash their hands before snacks, after toileting and messy play. More able, older children access the toilet area freely, increasing their independence in these skills, and children have access to tissues, however, these are not always easily accessible and children are not reminded of why they might require one or where they are sited, impacting on their use of these. Children talk about the importance of personal hygiene and know that washing hands is important to their health. Appropriate nappy changing facilities exist in order to support the needs of younger children. A written procedure is known by all staff when changing nappies to ensure that the chance of cross-infection is minimised. A range of documentation helps to further support children's health and medical needs, such as accident and medical records, which are stored and maintained appropriately, supporting children's well-being.

Children are introduced to a range of healthy and nutritious snacks, such as fruit, cut up vegetables and breadsticks. Records are obtained on children's dietary requirements before they begin, and made known to all staff, ensuring that children are only given foods appropriate to their needs. Themes are used to enable children to experience a range of tastes, such as sandwich making, noodles and haggis. Although children are offered a drink a snack time, they are not able to maintain their hydration independently as there is no free access to fresh drinking water.

Children begin to understand the importance of exercise for their good health as staff talk to them about the need for this as they explore movement to music, use circuit games and access the large apparatus. Again, themes are used to increase their development in this area, for example, the current theme is growth; the children have planted an assortment of vegetables and staff talk to them about how these are good for them and compare to foods that are not as good for them, such as crisps and sugary snacks. Their small muscle skills are used well. Children handle a range of equipment well and in safety, for example, scissors, glue sticks and paint brushes. Their hand-eye coordination increases as they manipulate construction pieces, turn pages in books and complete puzzles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are happy and content in the well-organised, bright and welcoming environment. Their sense of belonging increases as they view their achievements on display boards within the room. A good range of toys and equipment are available and easily accessed by children each day, increasing their skills in all areas of development. They take part in a range of play opportunities, either supported by staff, or developing their own ideas in small groups from the resources laid out, for example, changing a collage activity to suit their own ideas and using equipment to act out a range of role play. However, few opportunities exist for children to self-select resources as resources are arranged before children arrive, this impacts on their opportunities to increase their independence skills.

Children's safety and well-being are promoted throughout the setting. Entry to the building is well monitored and the front door remains secure when children are present. In addition to this, an alarm is fitted to the door, along with a doorbell to alert staff to visitors or persons

trying to enter the building, further supporting children's welfare. Exits remain free from obstruction and children are able to freely access the toilet area. A risk assessment is completed yearly and staff complete visual daily checks on areas and resources that children use, to ensure that they are not at risk of harm. Children use an outdoor area, which is well supervised ensuring children remain safe.

Children's welfare is maintained appropriately as some staff have attended training regarding child protection, and all are aware of local procedures and guidelines, enabling them to act appropriately should they have concerns regarding a child, or member of staff, in their care. In addition to this, a clear policy is in place, which is known by staff and is accessible to parents and carers, ensuring all are aware of how the setting supports children's safety and well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the interesting and stimulating environment. They arrive easily and greet peers and known adults by name. All children are well supported by the experienced and committed staff team, who know the children well. All areas of play are arranged before children arrive and staff talk to them at circle time about what there is to do and allow them to choose what they would like to do. Children's learning is enhanced through the assortment of adult-led and child-initiated toys and activities. For example, children accessing the creative table today chose to create their own collage of sawdust and described it as 'cornflakes' and 'sweetcorn' as well as making a 'tree' in the adult-led activity. Staff are aware of relevant frameworks, such as the 'Birth to three matters' and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, however, they do not yet plan effectively for the younger children at the setting, which impacts on their individual progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning for the funded nursery education programme is good. Staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage is secure, and, in the main, helps all children achieve their potential. Long-term and short-term plans are used to underpin children's learning and help staff plan a balanced range of activities, to reflect the six areas of learning. Staff know children well and use this knowledge to enable them to make appropriate progress in their learning. Photographic evidence shows how children have used activities and resources, which support most aspects of the Foundation Stage. Staff informally observe children daily and verbally use their knowledge of how well they know children to inform their planning. Assessments are completed on children, which, overall link to the six areas of learning. However, it is not clear how this information is gained, as there is no supportive evidence in place regarding their findings. Observation of staff:child interaction clearly indicates that staff know children well and they use a good range of open-ended questions, in the main, to enable children to think about their ideas. However, due to lack of formal evidence, it is not clear how children make progress through the stepping-stones, as no recorded evidence is available to show how activities help and support individual children. Observations and assessments are not yet used effectively to plot children's progress or their next steps in learning. This impacts on their individual development and some staff do not yet clearly offer differentiation in some activities, to enable them to meet individual children's learning or help them explore where children's learning is not yet secure. However, children's opportunities to explore a variety of mathematical and literacy skills develop well as staff set time aside one day a week to work in small groups with them. Though it is not clear how this information is used to support and extend children's learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted well. Children are happy and confident in their familiar surroundings and in their dealing with adults and peers. They share, take turns and develop a sense of belonging as they are given time in all that they do, helping them to achieve their full potential. For example, a child was given time to finish an activity when all other children had gone outside to play. They often show independence in some daily routines, such as taking themselves to the toilet and helping themselves to a drink off the tray at snack time. They behave well and apologise to each other if they have hurt one another. For example, a four-year-old was observed to stand on another child's toe. The child immediately apologised and asked the child if they were all right.

Children engage in conversations easily and confidently and are given time to respond. They develop their mark making skills in a range of activities and begin to use purposeful writing, for example, to make appointments or take messages in the role play area, as paper and pencils are always available to them. They use the 'jolly phonics' system to enable them to know the sounds that letters make and children correctly respond when asked what begins with 'w' for example 'whale, Wendy, water, wind and washing'. Children competently use a range of tools including glue spreaders and scissors in creative activities and practice pencil control as they colour pictures. Staff use questioning skills well to enable children to extend their language for thinking. Children begin to recognise print as they look for their name at registration and enjoy looking at a range of fiction and non-fiction books.

Most children can count confidently to 10 and beyond and show a developing awareness of size and quantity. More able children eagerly participate in the count down from 10 to one during circle time. They begin to explore space and shape in a range of planned activities and children are able to recognise shape as they make models from junk. For example, a four-year-old recognised a rectangle and square from the boxes that they were using, staff supported this activity well using 3D terms for shapes such as cylinder and cube. Opportunities to consolidate their knowledge are available in a range of activities such as shape sorters, number puzzles and threading.

A variety of adult-led and child-chosen activities help children learn about aspects of the world around them. For example, they learn about different environments when they compare how they receive water and how others receives it, for example, from a well. To help children understand this concept, staff filled a water bottle for each child. They all then walked to the other end of the village, children commented on how difficult this was and how tired they were; helping them to gain an understanding of how different their lives are to others. They use items of everyday technology, such as tills and telephones, in their pretend play and make use of simple computer programs. Children actively increase their awareness of how things work as they use a range of magnets and participate in a good range of activities to increase their understanding of growth and living things. For example as they plant potatoes, radishes and herbs. Excellent opportunities are available for children to explore and learn about their environment as they walk around the village on a regular basis to collect collage materials and learn about the changing seasons.

Children's creative ideas develop well as they explore a range of media, such as paints, play dough, soil and leaves. Their imagination extends as they respond well to role play situations and begin to give each other defined roles in their play, using appropriate language to support this. For example, a four-year-old was observed in the 'hospital' role play with an oxygen mask on the baby and commented 'the baby has breathing difficulties'. Children are familiar with a variety of songs and enjoy music and movement sessions on a regular basis. They have access to instruments in planned adult-led activities to increase their awareness of sounds.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well met as staff take time to get to know the children, and their families, which helps them to settle and to increase their sense of belonging. A range of information regarding their wants and needs is obtained from parents before they begin, enabling staff to support the children appropriately. A range of resources and well-planned activities enable children to gain an awareness of other cultures, lifestyles and disabilities as they play and learn. For example, during Comic Relief, the staff introduced stories from around the world and used a map of the world to enable children to see where other parts of the world, including their own, were. They often show sustained interest in their activities, as when a group of pre-school children play cooperatively in the 'hospital' role play or when older children spend time exploring the magnets during a table top activity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Currently there are no children present who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, there is a named Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in place, and although she has not yet completed any additional training specific to this role, has an awareness of how to meet the needs of all children through a range of working with parents and carers, planning for individual learning and supporting children through their play.

Children are confident and eager to learn. This in turn helps them to behave very well when at the setting. Children's self-esteem increases as staff offer praise and encouragement in all that they do. They begin to understand what is expected of them within the setting and when working together. Older, more able children, apologise for their actions, and begin to explain the rules to younger, less able children, offering them support as needed. For example, an older child was observed to help one of the newest children at the group with putting the resources away.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Sampled parents speak favourably of the caring and welcoming environment which helps them feel confident in the care offered to children. A well presented prospectus and accessible policies and procedures file, provide parents with generally useful information about staffing, routines and procedures, so helping staff and parents work together to meet children's needs. However, this written information does not always fully reflect the curriculum used for all age groups of children, for example, the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Newsletters, displays and photographs help to provide parents with information about current and previous activities. Parents of children receiving funded nursery education receive regular verbal reports about their children's progress towards the early learning goals, although there are limited records available for parents to view. Parents are able to have some involvement in their children's learning, for example by helping them find objects beginning with a particular letter and through a parent rota system.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are settled, busy, and enjoy their time at this welcoming setting. Staffing is well organised to ensure that the needs of all children are well supported and enable them to take time to get to know the children and, in the main, meet their individual needs appropriately.

Two supervisors share responsibility for the day-to-day running of the setting, who both hold a level 3 qualification in childcare, whilst a committee support the business side of the pre-school.

A strong staff team is in place that are committed to the improvement of the learning and education of children. Necessary records, such as daily registers and children's contact details, are readily accessible to underpin children's care. Staff are familiar with, and able to implement, the setting's identified policies and procedures. However, they are not yet using supportive guidance, for example, the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan for the needs of the under threes.

The leadership and management of the funded nursery education programme is good. Staff work well as a team and the supervisors support and include all staff in the planning of the programme for children. Staff know children well and use this knowledge to plan a varied and inclusive environment. However, formal observations, assessments and evaluation of activities are not yet in place to underpin what children have learnt and what they need to do next, which impacts on their individual needs. Systematic arrangements to identify continuing professional development needs through an ongoing appraisal programme are currently being developed but are not yet established. This has impacted on the individual learning needs of some staff at the setting.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting were asked to make available to all parents a written complaints statement that provides details of the telephone number and address of the regulator; ensure records are confidential to the individual child and to provide children with the opportunity to have healthy alternatives to biscuits at snack time.

The complaints policy has been updated to include details of the telephone number and the address of Ofsted. In addition to this, a poster has recently been displayed to the parents' notice board with this information on it, enabling parents to contact the regulator should they have any concerns about the setting. Children's safety is supported as all records maintained on them are stored and remain confidential within individual pocket files, in a locked cabinet, ensuring that persons who are not entitled to view these do not gain access to them. Children are offered a variety of healthy and nutritious snacks, for example, fresh fruit, cut up vegetables and breadsticks, which helps to maintain their health and well-being.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was given two points for consideration; to enhance the role of parents in their child's learning by providing them with further information about early learning goals for their child in all six areas of the curriculum and to enhance children's understanding of different communities and ethnicities by further integration in curriculum planning.

Children's parents are now made aware of the educational programme on offer to their children as they receive regular verbal information and posters inform them what their child will be doing. End of term reports and an open day have been implemented ensuring that parents and carers are fully aware of the progress their child is making in the six areas of learning. Children have many opportunities to explore a variety of ethnicities and communities, for example, through looking at how water is gained in other countries, which enables them to gain a greater understanding of the world in which they live.

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.

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 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 fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- further enhance the learning for children under three by ensuring that relevant guidance, for example, 'Birth to three matters' framework, is used when planning for their individual needs.

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):

- continue to develop the observation of children's achievements to assess their stage of development towards the six areas of learning and to reliably track their progress in all aspects of learning towards the early learning goals. Ensure that this process enables staff to set appropriate targets for children, suited to their individual needs.
- further develop the appraisal system to ensure that staff training needs are identified appropriately, enabling them to make progress in their personal development and to use this knowledge to support children's education and learning.

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