

# The Red House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	223585
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Deborah Ball
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Old Vicarage, Upton Bishop, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7UL
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<b>Registered person</b>	Angela Miriam Curry
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Red House Nursery School opened in 1996. It operates from four classrooms in a property adjoining the providers home, near to the village of Upton Bishop in Herefordshire. The setting serves the local and wider communities. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting and is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:30 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 19 children aged from three to five years on roll, all of whom receive funding for early education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery school employs three members of staff, two of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive because they are nurtured and cared for in rooms that are well-organised to promote their comfort and welfare to a very high standard. The staff implement rigorous health and hygiene procedures and they ensure that all areas within the nursery school are kept clean and well maintained. As a result of this effective practice and the high regard for children's health and well-being, the risk of cross-infection or contamination is minimised. Children follow the excellent examples set by staff and gain a very good awareness of hygiene matters. Staff also teach the children about good health and hygiene routines from an early age and as a result, children are learning to take responsibility for their own personal care. For example, they place their hands in front of their mouth if they cough or sneeze, they help themselves to tissues to blow their noses and they routinely wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating food. Staff further encourage children's self-care skills by praising and congratulating them when they remember hygiene routines without being prompted. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have attended first aid training and can administer treatment in the event of an accident. However, the format of the accident book does not ensure confidentiality and as a result children's personal information is not sufficiently safeguarded. Parents are clearly informed that sick children cannot be admitted to the provision and information regarding infection control and the advised minimum exclusion periods is readily shared with parents.

An excellent range of activities and learning opportunities ensures children are developing extremely positive attitudes to the importance of staying healthy. They show advanced levels of physical skills due to the time and support they are given to practise coordination, control and moving their bodies in different ways. Each day children are offered a wealth of robust physical exercise, both in the nursery school grounds and indoors. For example, the well-resourced adventure play area provides children with many physical challenges and opportunities to appreciate the rural nature of their environment. They practise balancing, crawling and climbing on large apparatus and show a keen sense of personal space as they play alongside each other, pedalling their bikes skilfully to avoid obstacles and controlling their speed so that they do not bump into their friends. Through playing energetic games, children are developing their skills of throwing and catching, hopping, skipping and jumping. Children play co-operative games, developing their understanding of sharing and turn taking. Movement and music sessions and action songs are enjoyed with joy and excitement. There is a vast range of different and interesting tools to use and this helps children to develop co-ordination and excellent hand and finger control. For example, they often plant, rake, water and dig in the vegetable patch and use scissors, paint brushes, rollers and pens freely throughout the session.

Children are well nourished and learn why some foods are better for our bodies than others through their discussions with staff and themed topic work. At snack time children eat a range of healthy foods including fresh fruit and vegetables, such as apples and pears, which they have harvested from the fruit trees in the garden. Discussions are held about the types of food they eat, where it comes from, what makes them grow and what keeps them healthy. Children have a choice of milk or filtered water to drink with their snacks and also have independent access to water throughout the session to ensure they are kept well hydrated. The staff have a clear understanding of children's dietary needs and any food items provided by them are in accordance with parental wishes.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a rich and stimulating learning environment which has been specifically designed to make the most of all learning opportunities and is based around developing the best outcomes for each child. Colourful displays and children's craft work are used extensively throughout the nursery school to provide interest, stimulation and to show children that what they do is valued. Children are provided with an extensive range of good quality toys, equipment and resources, which are appropriate for their purpose and used effectively to support their play, care and learning, both indoors and outside. Children thoroughly enjoy using the bright, stimulating toys and resources, which capture their interest and provide a wealth of opportunities for them to use their natural curiosity as learners. Toys are stored in well-labelled boxes, which are easily accessible to the children, promoting their independence and ability to make choices about what they want to do.

Children's safety and security are given a very high priority. The nursery school has developed detailed guidance, policies and procedures to cover all aspects of health and safety, which staff understand and consistently apply in practice. The proprietor and staff take positive steps to ensure children's safety within the setting is effectively promoted. Risk assessments are robustly carried out on a daily basis and used effectively to identify any potential hazards which, if found, are immediately addressed. Accident records are routinely reviewed and action taken when appropriate. Toys and resources are regularly checked and maintained in a good condition to ensure children's safety when playing with them. Children are very well supervised, enabling them to participate in an excellent range of challenging activities. The children are learning to keep themselves safe because the nursery school encourages them to understand about safety matters. For example, children regularly practise emergency evacuation drills which help to develop their understanding of the action that they should take in the event of a fire. Staff gently remind children how to use the large physical play apparatus safely, whilst allowing them to develop their independence and confidence. Children are also taught how to handle tools and other play equipment with care and they help to tidy toys away to prevent accidents from occurring.

All members of staff have been carefully vetted and have a very good awareness of child protection issues. Staff have a comprehensive understanding of how to protect children, and recognise that this is their first priority. They are vigilant, aware of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and know the correct procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child. As a result, children's welfare is safeguarded.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are confident and enjoy their time at the nursery school. They take part in worthwhile, meaningful activities which enable them to be imaginative, creative, active and purposeful. The children make excellent progress in all areas of learning and are well supported by adults who take an active part in children's play and in promoting their understanding. Staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use the framework to plan and provide activities for the younger children attending the setting as necessary. This ensures that children are working at a level best suited to meet their individual needs.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. The effectiveness of the curriculum planning and assessment for all funded children is exceptional. The staff's expert teaching ability is securely rooted in an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a clear understanding of how children learn and make progress. Teaching is consistently inspiring and challenging for all children and as a result they are making excellent progress towards their early learning goals. The learning environment is interesting and inviting to children and all six areas of learning are given equal emphasis in curriculum plans. The planning is comprehensive and highly effective, because it builds on what children have learnt in order to move them forward. The plans clearly state the learning intentions for individual children and how activities can be adapted to meet individual needs. The staff know the children in their care very well and are skilled in providing differentiated learning opportunities and in using a range of teaching methods to enable each child to reach his or her full potential. Staff are confident in adapting their plans in order for children to follow their own interests and initiate their own meaningful learning. As a result, activities and play experiences are exceptionally well-matched to children's individual needs. The daily routine is flexibly applied to ensure that children have time to finish their chosen activity. Staff are particularly skilled at providing children with frequent opportunities to revisit earlier activities and discussion points. This provides children with excellent opportunities to consolidate their learning. The staff encourage children to think and demonstrate what they know and understand. They make exceptionally good use of open-ended questioning and of spontaneous learning opportunities to extend children's learning. Activities are evaluated and used to inform future planning. The staff also use regular observations and assessments of children to accurately track each child's progress through the stepping stones and to plan for the next stage in their development. Assessment of the children's learning is effective in providing parents, carers and staff with a clear view of how each child is progressing.

Personal, social and emotional development underpins the rest of children's learning and is a particular strength within the setting. As a result, children are confident, self-assured and often show excitement and pleasure as they play and learn. Children are given a strong voice, their views, feelings and opinions are valued and acted upon and this makes them eager to learn and be independent. The children are always treated sensitively, given choices, asked for their opinions and so show closeness, trust and a fondness of the adults who support them. A variety of resources are used creatively and effectively to develop children's sense of responsibility, pride and the sharing of experiences or to create a quiet, caring atmosphere when children can listen and respond effectively. Children's self-care and independence is supported very well in day-to-day routines. For example, children put on their own outdoor clothes and manage their own toileting needs. Children know what is expected of them and are very well behaved as a result of consistent praise and encouragement from staff. This enhances children's self-esteem and reinforces their positive attitudes to learning.

Children's learning in the area of communication, language and literacy is exceptional. The children are confident speakers who use language widely during all activities to negotiate and express their ideas and feelings. Excellent use is made of discussion time when children are able to talk about exciting issues of the day such as birthdays or snow, share familiar experiences, opinions and ideas and talk about their lives, home and family. Conversation is allowed to flow spontaneously, with thoughts and ideas coming from the children. The children enjoy this special time, where staff interact effectively and use excellent questioning techniques to sustain children's interest and curiosity. Staff give good answers and explanations in response to their questions and comments and the children understand the concept of listening to each other and taking turns to talk. The staff read books and tell stories to children in a lively way, using a range of props, so encouraging and motivating their interest in books. Children listen enthusiastically to stories, joining in with familiar phrases and predicting what may happen

next. The children spontaneously access books for independent enjoyment, as the book area is well resourced and inviting and children regularly take books home to share with their parents and carers. Children develop their early reading skills as they link sounds to letters and recognise their names from cards during daily routines, for example, on coat pegs and on their artwork. Staff use spontaneous and focused activities to discuss the sound that an individual letter makes and children then readily suggest words beginning with a particular letter or sound. Effective use is made of print in colourful displays, name and nursery school equipment labels around the rooms and this creates a language-rich environment, where children can routinely see words and begin to understand that print has a meaning. The labelling of children's work or possessions helps them to recognise their own names and those of other children. A wealth of inspiring activities is used to help children to make marks and many can form recognisable letters and write their own names. A writing table is provided so that children can independently choose from a variety of writing materials and initiate their own mark-making activities. Staff observe the children's emergent writing skills and know the developmental capabilities of each child. They encourage children to progress on to writing their own names and focused activities are used to help children practise their letter formation before they start writing for a purpose. During their role play, children spontaneously use writing materials. For example, from the bird-hide, the children record the name of the birds they observe visiting the bird table.

Children are becoming very confident mathematicians who practise and refine their counting skills with a wealth of stimulating first-hand experiences. Number rhymes, puppets and games are used creatively to help them predict and recognise numbers and count in sequence. As a result, some children are able to count to 20 or more and are beginning to solve simple, practical number problems such as placing the right number of apples on a tree and understanding how this changes when one or more is added or taken away. Staff support this extremely well, helping the children to recognise that there are different ways of finding a solution, and listening and valuing children's ideas and suggestions. The children are developing an understanding of numbers for counting and as labels as they see numbers around the rooms, on posters and a number line and they match, sort and count at every opportunity. The children constantly hear staff using mathematical language and show a good understanding of shape and size, such as circles, spirals, big and little. Children show interest in and enjoy using the available technology in the nursery school, such as the computer and they are learning about space, shape and measurement as they play with sand, water and construction sets.

Opportunities for children to explore and experiment are extensive and fully support their learning in the area of knowledge and understanding of the world. The nursery school offers an interesting indoor and outdoor environment where children have excellent opportunities to observe, explore, question, and be curious. The children participate in a variety of activities using natural materials including den building, bark rubbings, taking care of the woodland and opportunities to use simple tools. Children investigate objects and materials, using all their senses. They have access to natural materials such as sand and clay. Outside, the spacious grounds provide an enriching environment for sports, play and study. During outdoor play the children find out about the natural world. For example, children participate in gardening activities where they can watch how plants and vegetables grow and observe the seasonal changes in the trees and flowers. The children enjoy observing the many animals at the nursery school including a goat, ponies, ducks, chickens and cats and learn about the animals and their feeding habits. Children learn the importance of being gentle with the animals, plants and insects they encounter in the nursery school grounds. During 'Science Week' the children enjoy a wide range exciting activities. For example, how to complete a circuit to a light bulb, creating a volcano and watching it erupt when they mix bicarbonate of soda and vinegar and working out how to separate pins from flour. The children find out about the wider world as they discuss where

they have been on holiday and pin up postcards next to a map. Children have excellent opportunities to design and make things with a variety of different shaped and sized resources and they make wide use of programmable toys as well as desktop and laptop computers.

Children enjoy a range of creative activities. They play with different materials and media, representing their ideas through painting, drawing and acting out different scenarios. For example, after observing a rook's nest on a woodland walk, children experiment with moving like a bird, create bird's nests using modelling clay and twigs and make edible nests using Shredded Wheat and chocolate. Children also made birds using feathers, paper plates, tissue paper, split pins and ice-lolly sticks. The children take pride in their creations and enjoy the tactile experiences during art activities. Children's art creations are valued and attractively displayed. The children can access various tools to use for different purposes to help develop their fine motor control skills, for example, scissors for snipping and cutting collage materials. They enjoy threading beads and using construction sets. Children also have opportunities to use paint brushes, cutters and other small tools for play dough and begin to develop their physical manipulative skills.

Children are familiar with songs and rhymes and join in with enthusiasm, linking actions to the words. They also enjoy listening to a wide range of music. Children benefit from a well-resourced role play area. They are able to play co-operatively or independently, following through their ideas together or on their own. The children clearly enjoy using their imaginations to develop their games in role play activities. For example, they enjoy being hairdressers and create interesting hairstyles, using the dolls as models.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are welcomed into the nursery school by very friendly staff and settle well as they are sensitively helped to feel secure and confident in their environment. Each child is highly valued as a unique individual and staff are familiar with their particular circumstances, needs and culture. As staff know the children so well, they are able to cater effectively for their individual personalities, abilities and interests and this enables the children to meet their full potential and develop high levels of self-esteem within a close knit, caring community. Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge and views of their children's development and this ensures that staff can provide appropriate and consistent care and education for each child. The nursery school's robust assessment procedures, which include individual targets for children, ensure that any concerns regarding developmental issues are promptly addressed.

Children are able to develop an awareness of the wider world around them as they access resources and activities that encourage a positive attitude towards diversity and a non-stereotypical view of society. The nursery school provides an excellent range of multicultural toys and equipment, such as posters, books, jigsaws, play people, dolls and dressing up clothes, to support children's learning. Children frequently participate in themed topics where they can learn about different cultures and festivals through a range of practical activities and experiences. For example, children have celebrated Easter, Harvest, Diwali, Christmas and Chinese New Year. At Harvest time children learn about the different ingredients needed to make bread and for Thanksgiving day they sample pumpkin pie. Colourful displays create an enriched environment where children can see an extensive range of images that promote positive views of diversity.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good care and attention. This is because the staff are able to use their professional expertise and knowledge to provide good

activities and high quality resources. Staff use a variety of techniques to meet the differing needs of children and constantly evaluate their progress. This means they are able to identify any possible problem areas early, and to work collaboratively with children's parents and, if appropriate, with outside agencies to provide the best possible care for each child. Where individual care and education plans are agreed, these have realistic objectives which are regularly reviewed.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children behave exceptionally well as they learn to consider others, make strong friendships and grow in self-esteem. They know what is expected of them and respond positively to the excellent role models provided by the staff, who demonstrate respect for the children, their parents and other members of staff. Children play harmoniously together and understand responsible behaviour because staff consistently use positive behaviour management strategies to help children to learn about what is right and wrong. The staff are very calm and give children clear explanations, appropriate to their developmental stage and level of understanding, as to why certain behaviour is unacceptable. Children learn to be helpful, polite, considerate and patient. They are very good at sharing toys, listening to one another in a group and they automatically thank each other when they are helped or given a toy. Staff support and encourage the children's good manners and positive behaviour with well-deserved praise and stickers.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The relationship developed with parents is quite exceptional and they make many positive comments about the level of care and involvement offered. This results in parents and staff working together to provide the best possible outcomes for children. The staff are very proactive in involving parents in their children's learning and in the life of the nursery school. Parents are provided with excellent information about the nursery school through the attractively presented prospectus, regular newsletters, photographic displays and information displayed on the notice boards. Staff initially seek information from parents concerning their children's developmental stages and their particular interests, which is used as a starting point for planning and assessment. This information can be added to through formal and informal discussions on a regular or daily basis. Parents are provided with comprehensive information about nursery education and how children work through the Foundation Stage of their education. All parents are consulted and kept well informed about what their children do and their achievements and they have access to their child's own development records. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the nursery school. Details about the range of activities their children are involved in are displayed, which outline the topics they will cover. Children and parents are then encouraged to bring appropriate items or artefacts into the nursery school from home, therefore supporting these learning experiences and opportunities. At the end of the summer term, parents and grandparents attend the nursery school open day to see their child being presented with a leaving gift. They are invited to wander around the nursery school with their child to look at the colourful displays and photographs on the laptop illustrating the superb work that is done throughout the year. Parents' views and concerns are always respected and acknowledged and effective systems are in place for ensuring any complaints are handled in a timely and efficient manner. All the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are looked after according to their parents' wishes. Staff and parents share written and verbal information effectively to ensure children's changing needs are met and to provide continuity of care.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children thrive in the well-organised environment and benefit greatly from the experience and expertise of the excellent team of staff who work with them. Staff and parents are highly valued and work collaboratively to ensure the best possible outcomes for children are achieved. The staff are experienced, knowledgeable and clear about their roles and responsibilities. The staffing group is exceptional in terms of their dedication and knowledge base and this is reflected in the high commitment to training and on-going staff development within the nursery school. The proprietor has a clear vision for the future and works tirelessly to ensure the learning outcomes for all children are exceptionally high. Self-assessment and reflective practice lies at the heart of the nursery school's organisation and this ensures practice is constantly evolving in line with the individual needs of the children attending.

Comprehensive operational policies and procedures underpin the successful running of the nursery school and effectively promote children's good health, safety, welfare and development. All the required documents and consents are in place to ensure staff follow parents' wishes regarding their children's care and well-being. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in legislation or childcare practice. However, the format of the accident book does not ensure confidentiality and therefore children's personal information is not sufficiently safeguarded. Stringent recruitment and appointment procedures ensure children are protected and cared for by staff who have relevant professional qualifications and a sound knowledge and understanding of child development.

The leadership and management of nursery school is outstanding. The setting is run by a well-qualified and experienced proprietor who leads and inspires staff. There is a considerable commitment to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the educational programme offered and high levels of dedication and enthusiasm shown by all adults who work in the setting. Staff work closely together to focus on all aspects of children's learning and this ensures all children make excellent progress, irrespective of their starting points. Records, documents, planning and assessments of children's learning are extensive, purposeful and systematic in ensuring that all children reach their full potential and become self-motivated and confident learners who relish the wide range of stimulating and thrilling learning experiences offered. Innovative and imaginative leadership and management lies at the heart of this highly successful nursery school. Views about the setting's strengths and weaknesses are constantly sought from staff, parents and the children themselves and this encourages continuous improvement and a high level of forward thinking. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

### **Care**

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the provider agreed to make improvements to policy documents relating to learning difficulties and/or and child protection.

Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Both policies which help to protect children have been reviewed and updated to meet the requirements of the National Standards and made available to parents. The child protection policy has been updated to include a statement on the action to be taken should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff. Child protection training is regularly updated and the proprietor is fully conversant

with the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance. The policy relating to learning difficulties and/or disabilities contains reference to procedures being followed with regard to the Code of Practice (2001) for the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs. This means that staff and parents are fully informed of the procedures being followed.

### Nursery Education

At the last inspection the provider agreed to provide more opportunities for children to record their findings. The staff provide materials and opportunities for children to initiate the use of writing in their play, as well as creating purposes for independent writing. Staff plan occasions where they can involve children in recording their findings, for example, recording the types of birds they observe from the bird-hide. As a result, the children use writing as a means of recording and communicating.

### 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.

## 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 outstanding.

### 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):

- review and improve accident recording procedures to ensure confidentiality.

#### The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)