

Hunsdon House Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY316340

Inspection date

10/11/2009

Inspector

Jill Milton

Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Hunsdon House Nursery School was first established as a privately owned nursery school in 1923. It has been registered under new ownership since December 2005. The nursery is situated in Headington, on the outskirts of the city of Oxford and it serves the local community. The nursery occupies two rooms on the ground floor of a detached property and there is access to a surrounding garden. The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Up to 40 children between the ages of two years and the end of the early years age range may attend at any one time and there are currently 33 children on roll within this age range. The nursery is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. The nursery is open for 39 weeks a year, with opening times on Monday and Friday between 9.00am and 12 noon. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday the opening times are between 9.00am and 2.30pm. The nursery supports children for whom English is an additional language. The nursery employs five members of staff and they have a range of suitable qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children receive a great deal of support and they are able to make good progress with their learning and development. The nursery environment is attractively organised to tempt children to play with many interesting activities. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the individual needs of each child and their approach to the inclusion of families is very good. Excellent partnerships with parents are in place with an effective two-way flow of information and welcoming opportunities for parental involvement. The staff team work well together under the focused leadership of the head of the nursery and there is an overall positive attitude to improvement. Staff work hard to protect children's health and safety but some procedures and documentation are not fully in place.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- carry out regular fire evacuation drills and record details in a fire log book of any problems encountered and how they were resolved
- improve the written record of risk assessment to include more areas of the nursery environment and outings
- ensure first aid supplies are regularly checked and renewed as necessary

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff demonstrate a responsible attitude to safeguarding children. New employees are carefully vetted by the head teacher to ensure their suitability to work with children. Staff with training in the area of child protection update the team on the latest guidance. The children play in a generally safe environment and staff are careful with daily visual checks to make sure areas where children play remain suitable. The staff are starting to maintain a record of their risk assessments, though there is insufficient detail and no information with regard to outings. What the staff do particularly well is organise the nursery to provide children with an array of tempting activities. The nursery owns a large quantity of good quality resources to support children's learning and in keeping with the philosophy of the setting, there is an excellent emphasis on natural materials. Staff work well as a team to make sure children receive close support during free-play times. There is a good balance to the sessions, with use of small group times and opportunities to explore the garden.

The nursery is overseen by an experienced head teacher who provides strong and focused leadership. There is a good overall approach to improvement and recent examples include the innovation of a 'baby day' for younger siblings to attend nursery or the acquisition of new resources like an indoor water tray. A recent initiative offers older children the option of a free afternoon session to increase their musical awareness. No formal written system is in place for self-evaluation, with staff relying on their regular discussions and team meetings to effectively reflect on the quality of their work. A new range of fire safety equipment helps to protect children's safety, though some members of staff and children have yet to take part in a fire evacuation of the building and a fire log is not maintained.

There are excellent partnerships in place with parents. The staff share a great deal of helpful information with parents through displays and newsletters. Parents can access a small library of reference books to provide them with guidance about child development and the staff offer supporting advice. There are delightful occasions in the year to include families in the life of the nursery, for example with trips to a local arboretum or the celebration of St Martin's lantern festival. The nursery shows a particularly supportive welcome to families for whom English is an additional language. They are proactive in learning key words from home languages and displays of lists with phonetic spelling aid staff in pronouncing words correctly in order to help the children. Parents who wish to stay with their children during a settling in period are not rushed and made to feel very welcome. The nursery is also making good links with local primary schools to provide continuity to children's care.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are developing into confident and well-motivated learners from their time in the nursery. There is a good emphasis on child-led activities with plenty of time

for children to make choices for themselves. The organisation of resources on low display units helps children to access equipment for themselves. Children are progressing well with many aspects of the curriculum and they are developing their skills for future life. They show an enjoyment in looking at books, searching out favourite stories to share with friends. There is a good emphasis on supporting language with lively singing times when children learn new words from languages different to their own. Children are confident at early counting and they sort objects by size and shape, showing good concentration. They are learning a great deal about the natural world through regular activities in the large garden where staff make the most of seasonal changes to support young children's experiences. Children have daily access to tools like scissors and they can express their own ideas using a large selection of recycled materials. There is a good mix of adult directed craft ideas for special occasions, such as preparing items for a Christmas market, balanced by plenty of child-initiated play. Staff plan the activities together and ensure that all areas of the curriculum receive appropriate focus. The staff know the individual children very well and can discuss in detail their stages of development. Since the last inspection, the staff have explored different ways to record the children's progress, though they are still working to find a manageable system that fits with their day-to-day work.

Children learn about how to stay healthy with regular opportunities to play actively and enjoy the challenges of a wide variety of equipment in the attractive gardens. When wet weather prevents outdoor play, the children take part in activities indoors and make some good attempts at following movements with control and co-ordination. Children take part in sociable meal times with good support from the staff who maintain a clean and hygienic environment throughout. The staff are aware of any special dietary needs of the children and discuss with parents issues about children's health or the occasional accident in the nursery. Staff refresh their first aid qualifications, though do not check the recommended use-by dates of first aid supplies. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe, since the staff are good at using play situations to reinforce messages. Discussions about not carrying toys when using the climbing frame or using control when cycling outdoors provide early lessons in behaving sensibly. Staff reinforce messages about being polite and they encourage children to behave well. Children show spontaneous moments of kindness to each other, helping a younger child to take off a painting apron, for example, or watching out for a favourite friend in the morning. There are many resources in the nursery to introduce children to the wider world and provide them with positive images of diversity. Children join in celebrations of festivals during the year and there is a strong emphasis in the teaching to support moral and spiritual development.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met