

Highbury Lodge Day Nursery

11 Highbury Road, HITCHIN, Hertfordshire, SG4 9RW

Inspection date	07/08/2013
Previous inspection date	03/11/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	1
	Previous inspection:	1
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- All children freely explore and investigate exciting materials and, as a result, they are extremely creative and engaged in their learning.
- Children have exemplary support to develop communication skills through robust staff understanding and teaching.
- Children are very aware of the wider world around them because the staff group introduce them to each other's, and new, cultures within all daily play and activities.
- Children show very high levels security in the nursery. They make independent choices about where and with whom they wish to play, and engage with initiatives that help them to become socially aware. As a result, children develop excellent self-esteem and attitudes towards learning.
- Staff are extremely inventive and develop a highly stimulating environment for children with exciting and natural materials, indoors and outside. As a result, children become deeply involved and learning is rapid.
- The managers and leaders are inspirational and engage with staff in highly effective methods of performance management and professional development. Consequently, they are motivated, committed and knowledgeable.
- The nursery uses highly successful strategies to engage all parents within the nursery and offers consistently valuable information for extending children's learning at home. As a result, children's learning is supported to the full.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in all rooms and the outside area.
- The inspector looked at a selection of documentation, procedures and information provided by the provision including safeguarding.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke with the managers, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed a selection of children's observation and assessment development files.

Inspector

Lynne Talbot

Full Report

Information about the setting

Highbury Lodge Day Nursery registered in July 2000 and is part of the Childbase national chain of nurseries serving the local and wider area. The nursery is on the Early Years Register and on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. It operates from a detached property in a residential area of Hitchin, Hertfordshire. The building is accessed via steps and level grounds and set across three floors linked by stairs. Children have access to secure outdoor play areas.

The nursery employs 29 members of childcare staff. Of these, 22 hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery opens Monday to Friday throughout the year with the exception of bank holidays. Sessions are from 8am to 6pm with additional hours available from 7.30am to 6.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 144 children attending of whom all are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- consider continuing to extend the outdoor learning environment with particular regard to the use of natural resources in inclement weather, and the further exploration of growing and living things.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff in the nursery demonstrate an excellent awareness of how children learn and are extremely responsive to their developing interests. As a result of excellent teaching, the children are highly motivated and show an enthusiasm for learning which results in them making rapid progress in their development. For example, staff notice that some children engage enthusiastically with music programmes using the interactive white board but show less interest in musical instruments. They use this knowledge to offer an art activity to make musical shakers, which results in groups of children who are engrossed in developing different types of music for themselves. To build further on the excellent partnerships with parents, the nursery use 'weekend books' as a method of linking home

and nursery activities. For instance, following the visits of many children to farms, the staff develop farm areas equipped with straw, model animals and model tractors to build on the experience and introduce further learning. As a result of such activities, children are engaged and motivated to learn. Younger children become fascinated with living creatures and observe stick insects from eggs to hatching. The staff resource an insect area with books and an array of items to explore. In this way, children repeat activities to reinforce the learning such as new vocabulary, comparing size and shape, matching insects and literacy.

Staff plan first hand experiences and challenges that greatly enhance children's learning and development. For example, all children engage in stimulating creative activities with a vast range of tactile materials. Younger babies eagerly investigate new materials and take part in safe science experiments, such as, floating and sinking with raisins, and using beetroot to tie-dye vests. Tactile 'walls', shredded papers, and a vast array of heuristic play opportunities are used by exceptionally supportive staff whose vocal encouragement and close attention maximises the learning opportunities. All children initiate singing and dancing with staff; they bring song and story sacks to them to enjoy their favourites. Younger children love puppets and props with songs, they squeal with laughter as they carry out actions and the enthusiasm of the staff means that they continue to be engaged. Staff fully understand the characteristics of learning and create a highly stimulating environment for children with exciting materials. For example, children investigate 'finding out' boxes filled with items to discover, such as an abundance of watches or locks and keys. Staff's teaching is exceptional because these resources are designed to foster free exploration yet link to specific learning. For instance, to extend their interest in a popular story that includes a magic key, the children explore the different keys and locks using highly imaginative play to develop stories together. Staff use every opportunity to incorporate learning such as building on children's preparation for a move to school and an interest in telling the time, with the watches and investigating numbers. As a result, children become more deeply involved and learning is rapid. Preschool children make books together to track their science discoveries. Each week they carry out an experiment, such as 'climbing ink', balloon rockets, or making butter. By planning such activities, the staff skilfully incorporate practical learning activities with support for children's literacy skills which helps towards preparation for a move to school.

Observation and assessment is sharply focused and builds from an initial assessment completed by staff and parents in partnership. Individual programmes for each child identify their next steps and their progression is tracked closely. Parents are fully involved in the learning; consultations and a 'reflection on progress' report completed each term keep them informed. Parents complete 'at home' observations which help to inform the planning. Ideas for activities at home are provided to enhance children's learning. Daily verbal exchange is a key part of the sharing process and enhances the close monitoring of children's learning and development. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or English as an additional language, receive extremely detailed and well-planned support to ensure that they make rapid progress given their starting points. The staff work closely with all agencies involved and any specific programme is closely followed to support children to meet their next steps and objectives in all areas of learning and development. The manager, supported by the company, closely monitors the progress of all children thereby ensuring that early intervention is used for any child, where

necessary, to support learning.

Children show an extremely strong urge to learn about each other's culture and the world around them. This is because staff fully embed an understanding of others throughout all aspects of the nursery day, in all rooms. For example, children enjoy Spanish lessons with a parent who is Spanish, cook cakes from Ghana with a grandparent, and view many clocks set to the time in different countries, where extended family members live. They enjoy group times where they explore the contents of 'language boxes' developed by staff. Children view text in many languages across all displays in the nursery, including, for example, the number books hanging in the maths area. The inclusion of all children and positive approach towards cultural awareness means they learn from each other and seek out new experiences. Children show that they are well-motivated and very eager to join in; they consistently demonstrate excellent characteristics of effective learning. Staff are particularly supportive and, as a result, the children confidently display their knowledge, solve problems, and initiate activities. This means that they are practising in preparation for new learning within any new setting, such as school.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The key persons in this nursery are particularly attentive and form excellent relationships with children and families and, as a result, children form close bonds and attachment with them. Each child has a second key person and this helps to reinforce the stability for children. The managers complete audits throughout the day to make sure that the deployment of staff is managed in the best possible manner to meet the needs of all children. Each child and parent is introduced to the nursery at their own pace using a very clear induction process. Extensive work is completed in the nursery on family trees. When parents provide pictures from home, the staff put them into family books to share with the children providing them with a sense of security. These methods add to the close bonds made between the key person, child and family, and underpin the relationship. Staff model excellent social behaviour for children and offer them frequent praise throughout the day. Children understand that they are all respected as individuals. They love to sit with their friends on the friendship benches and they eagerly examine, and contribute to, their own learning and development file. The staff display 'golden values' for each room which focus on positive behaviours. These link in to the simple methods used with the younger children of happy or sad visual face prompts, and the ongoing reward charts used for the older children, that foster excellent social behaviours. A vast number of celebrations are explored by all children, from the youngest baby to the pre-school children. Staff work extremely closely with all parents to learn as much as they can about children's family and culture. These highly effective methods all help children to understand their feelings and know that they are valued.

Children show excellent self-care skills and develop a very secure understanding of healthy eating. They are very well nourished and their health is fostered. The cook delivers an exciting menu that is freshly cooked and which accommodates every child's specific need. Detailed personal healthcare plans are implemented to ensure that dietary needs are closely observed. Children help to prepare the tables for meals, which enhance their understanding of the link between hygiene and health, and, from age two years, the

children are encouraged to self-select and serve their own meal. Such methods promote independence and prepare children for their next stage in learning and a move to school. Children demonstrate a highly developed understanding of their own health. For example, they confidently explain that if they don't drink they will 'get dehydrated and get a headache'. Children develop excellent physical health. Younger babies and toddlers have free-flow play between indoors and their own garden areas, while the children aged two years and upwards make free and independent choices to play outdoors in their key groups. The garden areas offer extensive facilities for natural and exploratory play, and staff continue to develop these to be able to offer this same quality of play in inclement weather. In addition, children eagerly take part in the active programmes 'mini strikers' (football), 'dinky dancing', and 'tiny mites' (puppets, singing and music). These help them to explore physical movement and activity further for good health.

Children's understanding of safety is promoted significantly and they take part in a road safety week each year. Children learn to take risks within a safe environment. For example, they use crates, guttering and pipes to build tracks in the garden, climb in and out of boxes testing their strength, and build tents with fabric and cones. Children learn about keeping safe in the nursery because they complete risk assessments of the premises. They visit each room as part of the 'safety spies' initiative and compile wall displays to show what they have discovered. This fully enhances children's own practical experience and awareness of keeping safe. Children's moves between rooms are extremely well planned to ensure that they are settled and ready for the move. The staff use detailed 'moving up packs' and the key persons work closely together to support the child through the process. This ensures that children's security is promoted to the optimum level. Children are prepared extremely well for any move to school. Their independence is emphasised and activities focus on the exciting forthcoming move. For example, children have samples of school uniforms in the dressing-up and eagerly talk about their new school. As a result of these steps, all children are extremely well prepared for school or a move to another room in the nursery.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The management team has very high expectations for the quality of care that is offered to children and families. This inspection was brought forward as a result of concerns received about a practice issue relating to safeguarding. Ofsted issued the nursery with a notice to improve, which asked the provider to ensure that the safeguarding policy is implemented effectively. The provider was also issued with a warning letter for failure to notify Ofsted. Arrangements to safeguard children within the setting are now particularly robust. Regular and robust reviews of all paperwork and procedures take place to ensure that all requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met. All staff have mandatory safeguarding training and it is reviewed at every team meeting. There are extremely clearly mapped procedures for monitoring any safeguarding concern within the setting. Managers closely monitor all staff actions and implement procedures that closely follow those required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the requirements of their registration. All staff and managers have recently reviewed and reaffirmed their full understanding of the procedures for referring any concerns about

children, or about fellow staff members. Staff and managers show an excellent understanding of when, and to whom, any concerns should be raised. They fully understand the role that the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Ofsted have in protecting children, and of how, and when, they must be contacted. Ongoing peer observations, as well as managers' supervision and observations of staff, ensure that a very high level of practice review takes place to both protect children and to support their learning and development. The manager and staff have changed the procedures for children when moving between areas inside, and outside of, the building. This has significantly improved the safety of children through closer monitoring. As part of the safeguarding procedures, there are extremely thorough recruitment and suitability checks, which include a detailed induction and probationary period for new staff. New staff have a 'buddy' and a mentor and have a clearly outlined professional progression path developed. As a result, the setting ensures that children are completely protected. Staff create an environment that is stimulating where children engage in active learning. The environment is especially safe and monitored by close circuit television and procedures for when children play indoors and outside are extremely secure. External doors are kept locked; parents ring the doorbell and are admitted by staff members. These measures demonstrate the high regard that the setting has for the security and safety of the children. Each day the management team make detailed records of all children and staff present. They organise staffing deployment carefully in order to meet the required ratios and, in addition, move extra staff in areas to support the welfare of children. Management staff have a clear overview of what is taking place in all areas, at all times, through constant monitoring throughout the day. Hence, children's welfare and well-being is shown to be of the utmost priority.

High-quality professional supervision is provided in the form of regular observation and feedback by managers, and room leaders, and twice yearly appraisal reviews. Each staff member has a personal development programme file in which they contribute evidence of their strengths to show how they meet the company competency framework. Staff have access to the company's online training programme and report that this gives them the opportunity to regularly review and update their knowledge. These methods feed directly to a targeted programme of professional development for the already first-rate staff members. Extremely thorough reflective practice includes input from all members of the management team, staff, parents and carers, and children. Room leaders set targets for improvement and each room has its own reflective working document that feeds into the main document for the nursery. The manager demonstrates that she has an excellent awareness of how to monitor and evaluate staff practice and the educational programme to ensure children progress in their individual learning. Quality audits completed by the company, and the input of external independent advisors, further assist the nursery to examine all areas of its practice and strive towards ongoing exemplary standards.

Parents are highly involved in the practice of the setting. For instance, each room has a parent representative who forms part of the parent forum and meets with the managers to raise issues, feedback positive comments, and scrutinise plans for development. The nursery provides regular informative training for parents. For example, evenings to look at behaviour management and the system used by the nursery to foster early communication and language, 'tiny talk', help to embed a common approach towards learning. As a result of these clearly embedded methods of working with parents, their feedback helps to drive

the continuous methods that maintain the high levels of achievement. The extremely close work with all other agencies involved with children means that children's needs are quickly identified and extremely well met. The partnerships with other settings that children attend are enhanced by visits by key persons to the nursery and the use of link books. In this way the shared information fully promotes continuity in learning. The dedication seen in reflecting on excellent practice and continuing to improve all aspects of the setting shows that there is a strong drive to maintain the high levels of achievements. Children are exceptionally secure and confident, and thoroughly enjoy their play and learning. Consequently, children embark on their learning career ready to seek out new experiences.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	146741
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	919298
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	74
Number of children on roll	144
Name of provider	Childbase Partnership Limited
Date of previous inspection	03/11/2009
Telephone number	01462 434317

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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