



## Highmore Hedgehogs

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	223537
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 March 2006
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<b>Registered person</b>	Highmore Hedgehogs
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Highmore Hedgehogs Pre-School opened in 2000. It operates from Westfields Community Hall in Herefordshire. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local area and has strong links with local schools.

There are currently 35 children aged between 2 and 5 years on roll. Of these, 20 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and

stay for the lunch club. The pre-school supports children with special needs and has procedures to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday although some children stay until 13:15 for lunch. On Wednesday and Friday sessions are from 09:00 until 15:00. The group also runs a holiday play scheme for four weeks during the holidays, opening the same hours, for children aged from three to under eight years.

The pre-school employs six staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from a local authority mentor teacher. The pre-school are currently engaged in updating the Quality Assurance Award at Bronze level.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is protected because staff recognise and reduce any possible risks. They take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection by keeping the premises clean, wiping tables in-between use and ensuring kitchen and toilet areas and children's play things are kept clean and hygienic. Children are well supported in learning to manage their own personal care as they wash their hands before meals, after toileting and during messy play. If children become unwell whilst at the setting, staff ensure they are made comfortable and cared for sensitively while waiting to be collected by parents. Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have attended first aid training and can administer treatment in the event of an accident. Children benefit from the calm and caring approach of staff when dealing with minor accidents that occur, which quickly calms the children. Good systems are in place to ensure that accidents are well recorded and shared with parents at the end of each day.

Children are given good opportunities to rest and get plenty of physical exercise. The daily routine offers a good balance of rest and active times and there is a comfortable book corner where children can sit and rest on a rug. Children play outside regularly and benefit from use of the hall for gym activities, where they warm and stretch their muscles before and after playing parachute games. They join in with gusto, squeal with delight, and are quick to recognise when they are feeling hot or tired after being active. Children play on a trampoline, climb through tunnels and use a climbing frame as part of their daily learning and play. This helps them to develop good control over their bodies. There are plenty of opportunities provided for children to move freely and expressively during music and moving sessions and even the youngest children in the group thoroughly enjoy moving their arms and legs as they sing their favourite action songs. All children show good co-ordination and control as they use small equipment such as bats, balls and hoops and show a keen sense of personal space as they play alongside each other. For example, they were able to move around the room to music when pretending to be butterflies and caterpillars, without bumping into their friends.

Children are provided with a variety of nutritious snacks and are offered drinks of milk and juice throughout the session. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions when children sit together in small groups around a table to enjoy their food and each other's company. A good variety of snacks are provided such as raisins, fruit, biscuits, carrot sticks and crackers and children also occasionally try out new foods such as pitta bread and noodles. Some children stay to lunch, bringing packed lunches from home, and are encouraged to learn to open wrappings and cartons to help them learn the skills they will need when they attend school.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a colourful and stimulating atmosphere where indoor and outdoor space is organised effectively and they can learn, explore and develop safely and with close adult support. Colourful display boards, equipment and resources are used to best effect, to create a child-friendly environment. Children freely access a variety of different activities and enjoy a stimulating range of toys and resources that are carefully arranged to allow them to easily choose what they want to play with.

Children play safely due to the priority staff place on ensuring all safety features are in place. For example, entrance doors are kept locked at all times and daily safety checks are carried out on the building, doors and outside areas. Physical play is zoned off with chairs to ensure boisterous play does not affect those children playing quietly within the same room, and staff stay with children at all times while they are using the trampoline or climbing frame. Children are well supervised and have a developing understanding of how to think and act safely. For example, when walking outdoors older children know that they should stay close to the staff and learn about crossing the road safely. Children's safety on outings is assessed prior to the visit to reduce potential risks and to identify any necessary procedures.

Children are suitably protected because the staff have a good knowledge of the known indicators of abuse and the procedures to follow in the event of a concern about a child in their care. Children are cared for by adults who are vetted appropriately and good policies and effective procedures are in place to ensure that volunteers and parent helpers at the pre-school are supervised appropriately.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the warm and caring relationships that are evident within the group. Staff work closely with parents to gain early information about young children's starting points, favourite toys, stories and personal care, which helps them to settle quickly and feel secure and nurtured. Two year-olds play alongside three and four year-olds benefiting from watching and learning from their older friends. They enjoy a range of activities which are adapted and amended to meet their individual stage of development and a strong emphasis is placed on helping them to develop confidence and trust in the adults caring for them. Children speak confidently, thoroughly enjoy

singing and free play times and are encouraged to use their senses through a range of materials such as sand, water and dough. Staff are aware of young children's developmental needs and have shown a commitment to seeking training and advice to ensure young children are fully involved, interested and learning appropriately. Their care is promoted well by the efficient and effective organisation which is further enhanced by the effective implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. A variety of stimulating activities are planned under both the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' and the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A high emphasis is placed on encouraging children's independent learning and creativity which helps three and four year-olds to gain the confidence to use their imaginations and try new things. Careful questioning and prompting from staff helps children to make sense of their experiences and extend their own ideas and children enthusiastically take part in creative, physical and imaginative play. Children talk happily about what they are doing, make decisions about what they want to do next, and are confident to ask for what they need. A varied educational programme is offered and staff show a clear understanding of how to move children forward in their learning. Creative use of topics and themes make learning exciting and enjoyable, while effective observations and assessment of learning highlight what stage each child is at and the goals set for their future development.

Children are expressive speakers who talk freely during large group times and chat happily during activities and when discussing their favourite stories and books. They enjoy a variety of good quality story and reference books. Children enjoy mark making and are making steady progress in recognising, sounding and writing key letters. Many children recognise their names and some can write them. However, children have less opportunities to see familiar words or symbols displayed around their learning room to help them understand that words have real meaning. As a result, three and four year-olds are not making full progress in the area of communication, language and literacy.

Children develop strong skills and positive attitudes to counting and using numbers. Counting and number recognition is threaded through most activities. Children count freely as part of their play. For example, they accurately counted how many containers they were playing with in the sand and counted how many times they bounced on the trampoline. They show a developing awareness of weights and measures through well considered practical activities such as weighing out ingredients during cooking activities and often hear staff using mathematical language such as small, medium and large. Children show a good understanding of shape and are able to name the most common ones. For example, they knew the pancake they made from dough was a circle. Songs and finger rhymes are used extensively to help children count, solve simple number problems and to understand positional language such as in, out, under and over.

Children explore freely as they use sand, water and gloop and learn to observe and question as they mix cooking ingredients together. They explore and develop their natural curiosity during interesting activities such as experimenting which objects float

and sink or watching the bread they have made begin to rise. Children become familiar with everyday technology as they use a laptop, a compact disc player and electronic play tills and learn to care for living things through topics and talking about how they care for their own pets.

Children are quick to use their imaginations, often make up their own games and stories and enjoy dressing up and pretending to be someone else during role play. Many creative topics are used to develop and extend their imaginations and this is a particular strength within the group. For example, children learnt about how a butterfly breaks out of its chrysalis by acting this out with a colourful parachute used to represent the butterfly's wings. They express themselves freely through paint, drawing, music and small world play and enjoy a wealth of crafts and use a variety of different materials. Music is used widely to stimulate children's imaginations during movement and music sessions and they freely use simple musical instruments such as drums, rain makers and tambourines to enhance their play and make up their own songs.

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

The provision is good.

Children are confident, self-assured and often show excitement and pleasure as they play and learn. They arrive at the setting eager to learn, settle quickly and often singing spontaneously as they play. Careful explanation and discussion helps children to develop a sensitivity towards others as they learn to share and work alongside each other harmoniously. Children's self-care and independence is supported extremely well, while free play sessions allow them to discover things for themselves. They receive good support from attentive staff who set good examples such as prompting children to say please and thank you or encouraging them to help tidy away their toys. Children behave well, responding positively to the clear guidelines and expectations set by staff and showing pride and pleasure at receiving stickers for being kind, helpful and achieving.

Children participate in a wide range of activities and experiences that promote a positive view of the wider world. This increases children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others. For example, during Chinese New Year children made Cooli hats and moveable Chinese dragons which they danced around the room with. Children with special or additional needs are well supported, with care and activities tailored to meet their individual needs. Staff are strongly committed to inclusion, work closely with parents and are quick to implement new ideas or suggestions from outside specialists to ensure all children can take part fully. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are encouraged to become fully involved in the setting by being part of the group's management committee or helping staff to care for the children through a rota system. Some parents also volunteer to help when children walk around the locality and visit the shops or go on excursions. Parents are given clear information about the setting and their children's progress and are regularly asked for their suggestions and feedback through daily discussions

and questionnaires. They learn about how the group operates through the group's prospectus, newsletters, notice boards and daily discussions and share in what their children are learning through seeing curriculum plans, photographs and playing alongside their children as they help out at the group. Parents can see their child's learning assessments and talk to staff about what progress is being made at any time. Although parents are provided with information about how they can make a complaint, the procedures are not in line with current requirements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The qualified and experienced joint supervisors work alongside staff to motivate and lead by example. They fully involve their team in the decision making and planning processes and training plans reflect the high level of enthusiasm and commitment shown by all staff to improve practice.

Effective systems are in place to monitor, assess and review the care and education provided, and the pre-school actively seeks parental views and gains advice and support from other early year professionals. Positive steps have been taken to address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and as a result, children's individual progress is tracked more effectively and opportunities for children to explore the world around them have been improved.

Well maintained documentation and records contribute to children's health, safety and well-being, and these are regularly updated to meet changes in practice, regulations and current early years thinking. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The previous care inspection recommended that the pre-school enhanced children's care by reviewing and updating policies and training in respect of child protection.

The previous nursery education inspection recommended the pre-school developed a manageable and effective system for observing, assessing and recording children's achievements, linked to the Foundation Stage stepping stones and further developed children's opportunities to explore the world around them.

Children's welfare is promoted and safeguarded because the staff have accessed training, reviewed the child protection policy and the procedures that they would follow in the event of a concern about a child in their care.

The pre-school was also asked to consider making improvements to the nursery education provided for three and four year-olds. Opportunities for children to explore the world around them have been improved since the last inspection. The pre-school plan activities to promote child-initiated learning, particularly for exploration, investigation and creativity. Initial and on-going assessments have also improved.

The pre-school have developed and implemented an assessment system which is effective, efficient and enables staff to track children's development through the stepping stones and use this information to inform future planning.

### **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 complaint 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):

- up-date the complaints procedure statement to reflect amendments to the National Standards

#### **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):

- devise methods of helping children to understand that words have real meaning, for example through the use of labels, pictures and symbols.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)