



Hope for Children and their Families

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY333183
Inspection date	03 November 2006
Inspector	Deborah Ball
Setting Address	Hope Family Centre, Hereford Road, Bromyard, Hereford, HR7 4QU
Telephone number	01885 488495
E-mail	admin@hopefamilycentre.org
Registered person	Hope for Children and Their Families
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care, Crèche

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hope for Children and their Families registered in 2006. It operates from three rooms in the Hope Family Centre in Bromyard, Herefordshire. The group serves the local and wider communities. A maximum of 16 children may attend the playgroup and 24 children may attend the holiday club at any one time. A maximum of eight children may attend the crèche which is available for parents attending training at the centre. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is open for 50 weeks a year. Sessions are from 09:00 until 15:30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for early education. The setting has procedures to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

The provision employs ten members of staff, nine of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The children benefit from being cared for in an environment where exemplary hygiene practices are encouraged. The inviting presentation of the hand washing facilities encourages children to manage their personal hygiene needs independently. Children have a clear understanding of why they wash their hands. For example, one child said 'I need to wash my hands because they have got paint on them and are all dirty'. Staff further encourage children's self-care skills by praising and congratulating them when they remember hygiene routines without being prompted. Exemplary hygiene procedures are carried out by staff who understand the importance of good role modelling. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection, such as staff consistently wear disposable gloves and aprons for nappy changing. There are excellent procedures in place if children become unwell. Parents benefit from informative posters that are displayed to alert them of any illness that is present within the setting. Staff ensure that parents are made aware of any specific signs and symptoms of an illness and remind them of the advised minimum exclusion times.

Children learn about aspects of healthy lifestyles through themed topic work. An exciting range of cookery and tasting activities inspire children to learn about healthy eating. Posters, puzzles and displays reflect the importance of a varied diet. Parents are given helpful guidance regarding children's lunch box contents. Children's awareness of the benefits of healthy eating is actively promoted at snack and lunch times. The children enjoy a wide variety of healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit salad and wholemeal toast. Children who stay for lunch sit together as they enjoy this social occasion. The children enjoy a wide range of varied, attractively presented and nutritious meals which are freshly prepared on site. Fresh organic produce such as vegetables and fruit are offered daily. Menus are produced to give parents information about meal choices. The children are able to choose a drink of milk, fruit juice or squash at snack and lunch times and have independent access to further drinks throughout the day. Children's cultural and dietary requirements are respected through using information provided by their parents.

The children benefit from daily opportunities to experience the fresh air and changing seasons in the safe and secure garden. During poorer weather, they enjoy spontaneous play and learning opportunities to wrap up warm in their splash suits and wellington boots and go outside to splash in puddles and enjoy the stimulating learning environment. All children are provided with an exceptional range of exciting and stimulating daily activities with opportunities to develop physical skills. The outdoor area is well planned to create an outdoor classroom which provides children with opportunities to use their imaginations as they build, explore and play. There is an excellent range of equipment to enable the children to develop their physical skills. For example, children climb, balance, twist, and jump on exciting play equipment and they are able to challenge their limits in a safe and secure environment. Children develop co-ordination and spatial awareness as they pedal and steer on bikes and scooters, develop ball skills and enjoy running around. The children play co-operative games, developing their understanding

of sharing and turn-taking. Children benefit from enthusiastic staff involvement and interaction when playing outside. The outdoor play area is used extremely well to provide children with opportunities to link other areas of their learning, such as counting and colour recognition. Children develop their fine motor skills using a variety of tools, natural materials and commercial equipment and have opportunities to make marks and develop their pencil control in various areas of play. The children relax and enjoy the calm atmosphere in the multi sensory room which provides primary sensory experiences which they can manipulate or enjoy passively. For example, children enjoy the exciting multi-duplication of images plus changes of shape and size in the amazing mirrors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children enter an environment that is highly stimulating, exciting and motivates all aspects of their development. The rooms have been extensively planned to facilitate children's independent learning, as resources, which are of an excellent quality are stored easily within their reach, promoting their independence and ability to make choices about what they want to do. The space is extremely well organised to promote children's natural curiosity as learners as they access areas that are dedicated to certain aspects of learning. The children are engrossed in a wide range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate activities which provide high levels of challenge.

Children move around the vibrant environment freely and confidently. The children's safety is assured through the vigilance of conscientious staff, who complete daily visual checks and comprehensive annual risk assessments to identify and reduce risks to children. Any visitors to the setting are vetted at the reception area and staff are vigilant in confirming identities of unfamiliar faces. The children actively contribute in developing an awareness of their own safety. For example, the children have recently been learning about how to cross the road safely and develop an understanding of how to evacuate the premises in an emergency through regular fire drills. Policies and procedures are consistently applied by diligent staff in regard to supporting children's safety and welfare.

Children's welfare is extremely well promoted by a team of staff who have an excellent understanding of child protection issues and recognise that this is their first priority. Procedures for reporting concerns are implemented consistently by the management team and all staff complete training in identifying possible signs of abuse. The management team work in numerous ways with external agencies to meet children's needs and ensure their protection. There is a clear statement which is shared with parents so that they know what action will be taken if staff have any concerns about their children. The children are cared for by adults who are vetted appropriately and suitable systems are in place to ensure that children are protected from staff awaiting their clearance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children benefit from a stimulating, colourful and exciting care and learning environment where they make good developmental progress. Whichever aspect of the provision they attend, children have great fun and relish their time at the setting, making decisions about how they would like to spend their time. Children are forming positive relationships with their peers, playing cooperatively and involving each other in their play. They have excellent relationships with the staff who help them to develop their confidence through sensitive interactions and warm praise and encouragement. The children access meaningful and exciting play opportunities that support and develop their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development and are enthusiastic to take part. Staff have high expectations about what each individual child can achieve and support them well to achieve their full potential, given their capabilities and starting points.

The learning and development of younger children is enhanced through the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children relish well resourced free play periods when they begin to make choices about their own learning and take part in more structured activities, adapted to meet their individual level of development. The key worker system has successfully achieved strong and trusting relationships between children and staff. Key workers carefully record observations and assessments of children's progress. Examples of photographs and children's art work complement these written observations and are readily shared with parents. Younger children are supported and encouraged to make decisions such as which toys to play with which enables them to gain confidence to try new things. The staff give lots of praise and reassurance whilst interacting and communicating with all children which helps them to feel happy and secure. The children enjoy sensory play, using materials such as shaving foam, clay, pebbles, ice, sand and water and are encouraged to think about how objects feel, smell and taste through first hand experiences.

Children attending the after school club and holiday play schemes relish being able to relax and make decisions about their play and activities. Children can choose to join in craft activities, build models with the Lego, physical play activities in the outdoor area or relax in the sensory room. They also thoroughly enjoy a variety of exciting planned activities provided by professionals such as musicians, artists and sports people. Weekly trips to local National Trust facilities provide the children with the chance to explore and appreciate the local countryside. Children also enjoy excursions further a field to the zoo or a farm.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a very clear understanding of how children learn. A variety of exciting and varied teaching methods helps to ensure children remain motivated and keen to learn. Children are well supported and grouped appropriately, enabling older children to work in small groups on focused activities. There are effective systems in place for establishing children's developmental starting points and individual interests on entering the setting and for using ongoing information provided by parents. Children's continual progress is observed by all staff and recordings made of their achievements.

However, the information gained from assessments is not being used by all staff to track children's individual progress through the 'stepping stones' and to assist in the planning of activities to meet children's individual learning needs.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority. Children are warmly greeted by friendly staff and separate happily from their parents and carers. Within a nurturing environment, children are individually supported in gaining confidence and self-respect. Children are very motivated to learn because they are actively involved in the learning process and are able to make choices about how they use activities to meet their own learning needs. The children play cooperatively and chat happily as they play with toys and engage in games. Children behave very well, with staff continually praising and encouraging them, so enhancing their self-esteem and reinforcing their positive attitudes to learning.

Children's language and communication skills are developing well because staff use effective strategies to support children's use of language for communication. The children speak very confidently and freely communicate their needs. Staff make time for children to ask them questions and they respond by giving good answers and clear explanations to sustain children's interest. Children enjoy having stories read to them and listen intently, showing excitement and pleasure by joining in with familiar parts of their favourite stories. They independently access a variety of good quality story books for their own enjoyment, as the book area is well resourced and the triangular mirror house is an inviting place to share a book with a friend. Children enjoy mark making and use appropriate implements such as pencils, chalks and crayons with increasing control. They have opportunities to see and recognise written words, including playgroup equipment labels and their own names. Children also have many opportunities for writing and are beginning to link letters to their sounds. Activities such as role play are used to introduce children to writing, for example, the post office has writing pads and envelopes for letter writing.

Children show a keen interest in numbers and counting and most confidently use and understand numbers up to ten and above. Counting and number recognition is threaded through most activities as children count, match and compare numbers of objects. Children count freely as part of their play. For example, they accurately counted how many sandcastles they built while they were playing with the sand. Children 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's knowledge and understanding of the world is fostered through many practical activities. The children have opportunities to observe, explore, question and be curious, in a broad range of activities. For example, children experiment by freezing water into icy shapes, sculpt soap snow into a variety of shapes, enjoy cornflower magic and they learn to observe and question as they mix cooking ingredients together. The children explore and develop their natural curiosity during interesting activities, such as discovering which objects float or sink. Children are encouraged to extend activities to meet their own exploratory needs and to use

their natural curiosity to find out how things work. The children learn about recycling as they put their food scraps into a wormery and create rich compost for the garden area. Children are very adept at using the computer and other technology. There is a comprehensive range of equipment available for children to extend their skills in information and communication, such as, in using play telephones, a tape recorder, push-button toys, a digital camera, Bee-Bots and the computer.

The setting has regular outside support from other professionals in the fields of music and drama where the focus is developing children's creativity. Children are encouraged to make very good progress in their creative development through producing paintings, drawings and models which are valued and displayed within the setting. Opportunities to participate in interactive workshops, such as live theatre presentations, fire their imaginations and they talk excitedly about what they are making and doing. Children play imaginatively, using a well-resourced role play area, where they can independently select resources and use fact or fiction to act out their experiences from home and the wider community, thus developing their imagination and creativity. Music is effectively used and children appreciate the opportunities they have to listen and dance to various pieces and they enjoy singing popular tunes and rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging within the setting as they form excellent relationships with their peers and the staff who value and respect their individuality. Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge and views of their children's development and this ensures that staff can provide the most appropriate care for their child, based on their individual needs. The children have excellent opportunities to learn about the world in which they live through planned activities, visitors to the setting and outings to local places of interest. Through the daily routine and planned topic work they develop an understanding of music from other countries and explore the tastes and textures of foods from around the world. Everyday there are opportunities for children to play with resources that encourage their appreciation of diversity, for example, small world figures of differing disabilities and ethnic origins are always readily available. Posters displayed around the setting introduce children to a wide range of ethnic origins.

Children with learning difficulties receive a good level of support because there are effective systems in place which enable staff to implement individual learning plans for the children and to work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure each child is able to make sound developmental progress. However, a consistent approach to supporting children who speak English as an additional language has not yet been developed.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The children's behaviour is exemplary due to the staff's consistent and skilled approach in promoting positive behaviour in a manner which is proportionate to the child's level of understanding and maturity. Children respond very well to the excellent role models being offered by the staff, who demonstrate respect for other members of staff and children. The children are calm in response to their relaxed manner and are able to share and play fairly with little or no prompting. Furthermore,

children's understanding of right and wrong is developed through gentle reminders to care for their environment, the resources and each other. Children benefit from having consistent boundaries and their self-esteem is well promoted through regular reassurance, praise and encouragement.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents and carers are warmly welcomed into the setting. They appreciate the very good relationships with staff established during initial visits to the centre and these are consolidated during daily exchanges of information about their children. There are excellent arrangements in place to share information with parents. The parents are given detailed information about the centre, via the prospectus, notice boards and regular newsletters which helps them to make choices regarding the range of day care facilities and other activities available to them. There is a parents' notice board which is regularly updated to enable them to play a full part in their child's learning and includes information on events and activities the children will be involved in and ideas that parents can try at home with their child to further extend their learning. The staff know the children well and are able to provide for their individual needs because the key worker system works effectively to enable the staff to provide appropriate care and learning opportunities for all children and to support parents with information and advice. The parents are well informed about how their child is progressing through regular communication and access to their child's personal assessment records which include observations, photographs and samples of work. Parents are given clear and meaningful information on all aspects of the care and education provided. They are regularly invited to comment on the provision for their children and their views and wishes are used to identify areas for improvement in the settings action plan.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care, learning and play are very well supported by excellent organisation. The manager's energetic leadership and the staff's enthusiasm, and their consistent robust responses to their ongoing development plans and evaluations ensure that children and their families have high quality day care. Thorough recruitment, vetting and appraisal procedures ensure that staff are suitable, very able and highly motivated.

Children experience rewarding activities and benefit from the support and encouragement of a very able, intuitive and caring staff team who offer high levels of individual attention to the children. The staff demonstrate great enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates, excites and motivates children of all ages. Children's care and welfare is supported by clearly recorded, well organised documentation. A clear operational plan, plus associated comprehensive policies and relevant guidance support the staff's practice. Staff's knowledge and understanding of these contributes to their successful implementation, thus ensuring that children are safe and appropriately cared for.

The leadership and management is good. The management and staff are enthusiastic and motivated and work very well together as a team. They continuously strive to provide a high level of care and education for the children and have a clear understanding of the setting's strengths and weaknesses. There is an action plan in place to improve the existing good practice. This helps to ensure that the care and education provided for the children is regularly under

review, with a commitment to continuous improvement. Staff are able to access appropriate training opportunities and are committed to improving their knowledge and understanding, as their self-development is supported and valued by the management. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 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):

- develop systems for supporting children who speak English as an additional language

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):

- develop the existing assessment procedures to ensure that all staff are able to track children's individual progress through the 'stepping stones' and consistently link the information to the planning of activities that meet children's individual learning needs.

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