

Kings Hawford School Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Type of inspection | Nursery Education |

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 NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

King's Hawford School is an independent school in a rural location just north of Worcester city. Children attend from a wide catchment area. The kindergarten operates from two classrooms with an adjacent enclosed play area. Children also use communal facilities within the school, such as the school hall, Forest School area and the adventure playground. The before and after school clubs use most of the school facilities including the swimming pool.

There are currently 318 children aged from two to 11 years on roll in the school. A maximum of 122 children may attend the kindergarten and before or after school club at any one time, with a maximum of 100 children attending the holiday club.

There are currently 97 children on roll in kindergarten and reception, and of these 68 children receive early education funding. Support is available for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for children for whom English is an additional language. The kindergarten and the before and after school clubs are open in school term time only from 08.00 to 18.00. The holiday club operates all the year round, apart from a short break at Christmas and late summer. Sessions are from 08.30 to 17.30.

Fifteen staff work with the children in kindergarten and reception. Of these 14 staff have relevant teaching or early years qualifications. Children are also taught by specialist teachers for music, French and physical education sessions. Additional staff work with the children in

out of school care and the holiday club. They all have relevant teaching or play work qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority. Representatives from the school attend local early years partnership meetings and providers' forums. The school is a member of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools and the Independent Schools Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children in kindergarten and reception classes enjoy a very good range of carefully planned and well-organised activities and lessons. Topics, activities and experiences fully promote children's understanding in all of the Foundation Stage areas of learning. For example, in kindergarten the current topic on mini beasts offers children meaningful opportunities to observe and research different living things. During rewarding practical activities using stimulating resources, children observe, draw, paint and make models of different mini beasts. Their pictures, collages, and models are detailed and clearly represent the creatures they have been looking at.

Children talk knowledgeably about the characteristics of different mini beasts because they have opportunities to observe them first hand, for example, monitoring changes to the tadpoles kept in a large see-through water container. When playing outside and taking part in Forest School, children look out for different insects. A range of enjoyable stories, interesting picture books, puzzles and games really help children to understand changes to caterpillars and tadpoles and to identify different insects' features and habitats. During a drawing activity children talk to each other as they carefully examine realistic toy mini beasts and work out how they can best depict particular attributes such as a caterpillar's 'legs' or a scorpion's body. Another couple of children engage in a detailed, and at times quite spirited, conversation about grasshoppers and crickets.

Kindergarten staff also skilfully ensure that activities linked to a topic provide meaningful opportunities for children to consolidate and build on key skills such as their emergent writing, counting, number recognition and awareness of shape, size and colour. When drawing and painting pictures of mini beasts, children are encouraged to write the name of their creature and their own name. Children adeptly count and record features such as the number of antennae, eyes, legs or wings. Similarly in reception, teachers are skilled at engaging children's interest and ensuring that their understanding is fully supported and extended by well-thought-out activities. For example, a much enjoyed story of 'The light house keeper's cat' leads on to various activities focusing on rhyming words, depicting the story through pictures, completing word searches, making models and collages to reflect aspects of the story and, in the role play area, acting out seafaring scenes. Practical and often quite challenging activities ensure that children in reception also confidently work out number problems and they are becoming increasingly competent at estimating in relation to quantity, size and length.

Children make very good progress because staff clearly understand each child's learning needs and ensure these are reflected in the planning and organisation of activities and lessons. The setting's robust assessment procedures ensure children's progress is consistently observed, monitored and reviewed throughout the Foundation Stage. Parents are encouraged to share their views regarding their children's development and learning. Comprehensive and coherent planning fully supports all aspects of children's learning and development. Staff consistently

ensure that they plan activities and provide resources that promote, consolidate and extend children's understanding and skills at each child's pace. Short term plans and activities are adapted to cater for children's differing levels of understanding and ability. More able children respond to the adults' high expectations and more challenging work, whilst children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are younger or less able grow in confidence in a nurturing supportive environment.

All children benefit from the staff's interest and encouragement. They ensure learning is both fun and purposeful. Activities are well thought out, carefully equipped and resourced. For example, kindergarten children are resourceful, active learners as they thrive in a stimulating indoor environment and a most inviting adjacent outside play area. Children concentrate and persevere. Staff patiently and calmly support those who find this difficult, but they know when to take a step back when children are ready to direct their own learning. Children are self-motivated and keen to complete tasks because sessions include worthwhile opportunities for their self-initiated activities. Children are also eager to learn because their ideas, choices and suggestions are welcomed by staff. They often have opportunities to talk about or to display their work. For instance at the end of a busy lesson, reception children show examples of their written work, display their artwork and describe their role play to their peers. Children are confident and articulate because staff really encourage their descriptive language, recall and reasoning and thinking. They extend children's conversations and discussions through adept questioning and clear explanations.

Children's learning is also fully supported by extensive use of outside areas. They are active, relishing free physical play in outdoor areas where they can climb, balance, run freely and roll down slopes. Older children go swimming, and well-organised physical education, music and movement sessions promote their awareness of space and using their bodies in different ways. Children appreciate the importance of a healthy lifestyle as a result of these activities, through eating healthy snacks and meals, and by taking part in discussions and activities such as cooking.

Attending Forest School in a small area of mature woodland extends children's physical skills and coordination and promotes their respect for the environment, their creativity, their listening skills and their positive relationships. For example, children and staff sit quietly and listen to the different sounds in the woodland and discuss what they have heard. Children comment on and observe birds singing, and remark on traffic noise from a nearby road. Interestingly, someone hears the noise of a 'shark'. Children have strong sense of the need to care for the environment. They readily remind others about leaving all natural items at Forest School. They help to recycle, collecting anything left over from their fruit snack. Children play together as they act out their own imaginary scenes or experiment with sound, making 'instruments' from logs, sticks and leaves.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children readily talk about their families and homes. They and their families are fully included in the life of the school, attending special events such as grandparents' day and reunions and helping with fundraising. Topics enable children to explore different aspects of their own lives and people's roles within the community. A stimulating range of activities, toys, books and resources, including displays, help children to appreciate similarities and differences and to respect other people's lifestyles, culture and beliefs. They take an active part in the school's annual international day when they explore features of a particular country's culture and lifestyles. Through a range of

rewarding activities focusing on different festivals, children find out about various customs, beliefs and celebrations. Activities also reflect the school's Christian ethos so that Bible stories and opportunities to discuss the contributions of people like Ghandi and Martin Luther King foster children's awareness of tolerance, respect and understanding of right and wrong. In practical ways children are able to discuss and express different feelings and their reactions to various situations. Through Forest School activities, growing seeds and plants and helping with recycling, children develop a strong sense of the need to care for their environment and to look after living things.

Children behave very well. Staff create a nurturing secure environment where children know what is expected of them and they are encouraged to do their best. Staff prepare children for what is going to happen next and ensure they understand how they are expected to behave, for example, when it is important to sit quietly, listen attentively or move safely from one place to another. Children's suggestions, contributions and efforts are always positively welcomed and acknowledged. As a result children feel valued, they are confident and have very positive relationships. They relate very well to their peers and adults and are kind and caring, sensitively involving a less confident child in a game or helping a friend with an activity. Children understand about sharing and are resourceful in managing situations where this might prove more difficult, for example, by using an egg timer to help turn taking with a popular toy. Children are helpful, carrying out different tasks, looking after their possessions and assisting with tidying away toys.

Children have a real sense of belonging and develop positive self-esteem because staff are kind, reassuring and interested in them. Their efforts and achievements are acknowledged and praised by adults with many opportunities for children to share in each others' successes. Children enjoy talking to their peers about what they have been doing and to show examples of their work. Their drawings, paintings and artwork are displayed for everyone to enjoy.

Children also feel secure as their differing abilities are fully understood and provided for. In line with the school's commitment to inclusion children have a curriculum that really reflects their individual needs, differing abilities and varied interests. The setting's robust assessment procedures ensure that staff know each child well. Any concerns regarding a child's learning and development are promptly identified and effective strategies are implemented. This includes working closely with parents and establishing positive relationships with other agencies. Children's different language needs are fully supported and the school is well prepared for working with children who speak English as an additional language. Activities and resources are adapted to cater for children's differing levels of skill or understanding so that, for example, staff confidently provide work to extend the skills and understanding of children who are very able and excel, whilst sensitively and capably supporting those who are less able or confident.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children's learning and progress is very effectively promoted because of their parents' and carers' involvement. Parents are well informed about the Foundation Stage. They are given comprehensive guidance on the six areas of learning and approaches to learning, including explanations of the use of observations and assessment. Parents and carers have a clear idea of the range and purpose of activities their children are engaged in because the organisation and management of Foundation Stage sessions are clearly explained, children's work and plenty of photographic evidence are displayed, and regular newsletters outline the aims and content of forthcoming topics. Parents and carers are encouraged to attend special curriculum evenings. They are also warmly welcomed into classrooms on a daily basis as they drop off and collect their children, when they can see what their children have been doing and talk to staff.

Children benefit greatly from their parents' involvement in their learning. From the outset staff encourage parents to share their views about their children's abilities and interests. This helps staff to settle children and to assess their starting points. Thereafter, parents' input is actively encouraged as staff discuss and review their children's progress with them and agree the next steps for each child's learning, for example, during informal discussions and at regular parents' evenings.

Children also make excellent progress because of their parents' contributions to their learning. They are encouraged to provide items for activities and topics. Parents assist in sessions such as telling the children about their job or by taking part in in Forest School. Parents support their child's learning at home, for example, helping children with letter sounds and reading. Positive home-school links are further endorsed by special activities such as reception children taking turns in looking after their class's special teddy bear and helping their parents to report back on their 'adventures'.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of funded children is outstanding. Children's early education is rewarding, exciting and relevant because the school's head teacher, head of pre-prep and dedicated early years managers and staff share a determination and vision to ensure children have high quality teaching, excellent resources and stimulating indoor and outdoor environments.

Children thrive because they are supported by a great staff team who work very well together whilst bringing individuality to their roles. They clearly understand the expectations of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They keep up to date through regular training and attending good practice sessions. Children are contented, confident and self-motivated as staff create a fun rewarding atmosphere in all areas. Children's learning is enriched by great resources, relevant books and interesting materials. Children's learning and progress is underpinned by coherent, robust planning and assessment catering for their individual needs and differing abilities, all in line with setting's comprehensive curriculum policies.

Children benefit from the school's commitment to improvement. For example, Forest School and other developments to outdoor areas have had a significant impact on all aspects of children's learning and development. The school's robust monitoring and review procedures and commitment to training and good practice ensures that children consistently have high quality early education and that staff confidently embrace new initiatives.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to improve opportunities for children in reception classes to express themselves creatively and to take part in practical writing and mathematical activities.

In both reception classes, children benefit from the inviting layout of activities and access to stimulating resources. One classroom has been extended and in both classrooms space is used creatively to include distinct activity areas where children can take part in meaningful practical numeracy and literacy activities and engage in rewarding imaginative and exploratory play. For example, role play areas often reflect a particular theme; the annual church wedding scenario is especially popular with all participants. Children appreciate that their work and ideas are valued as many examples of their written work, models and artwork are displayed in their

classroom or the area adjoining both rooms. Children's self-portraits are a distinct and delightful feature of the adjacent outside area.

Complaints since the last inspection

Not applicable

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

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