

## **Copy of a Letter attached to a 'Parent Comment Form'** **for a Care Commission Inspection**

Headstart Nursery School - Care Commission Inspection

My husband and I very much welcome the opportunity to comment on Headstart Nursery School, in relation to its annual inspection by the Care Commission. Our daughter has attended the Nursery since the age of 2: at first, for a few sessions each week, gradually increasing to every afternoon.

We cannot speak too highly of Headstart. Our daughter's experience – and ours has been uniformly positive, and has far exceeded our expectations.

At the most basic (but necessary) level, Headstart is well administered and very competently run. We have had no problems at all with administrative arrangements: and indeed on one occasion the office identified an overpayment and returned it to us before we even realised what had happened!

In terms of its organisation, the daily routine is carefully structured and gives the children a sense of security and progression through the day. This moves them gently on from activity to activity, preventing boredom and giving them a sense of anticipation, satisfaction and achievement. The staff provide the sense of order and regularity which small children need to help them structure their daily experience. However, the Nursery is also very good at varying the routine with special events (parties, special visitors, baking, dance and French classes, walks, photographers, special outings and so on) so that it does not become stale or overly rigid. The children are also helped and encouraged to make lots of friends, and to develop social skills with an emphasis on caring and sharing.

The curriculum which the Nursery offers has been of immense benefit to our daughter. She has been helped to develop a firm grounding in numbers and letters which we believe will indeed give her a strong foundation for primary school: and this has been acquired through many varied, imaginative and enjoyable activities. The themes which the Nursery adopts open up much imaginative play; and we are repeatedly delighted by the drawings and wonderful craft work which are brought home. The dance classes and French classes have been a special joy and have set foundations we believe will last a lifetime.

Since my husband and I both work in higher education, we can see how well the curriculum is managed and delivered, and we have been delighted with the results.

Parents are also well supported by Headstart. The daily report sheets give excellent information on what our daughter has been doing during the sessions, so that if she has forgotten, we can prompt her with questions which lead her to talk about her day. The regular periodical reports are very detailed, lovingly compiled and beautifully presented, and the Parents' Evenings give ample opportunity to see videos of the Nursery day, talk in detail to staff and meet other parents.

However, none of this expresses what we really want to say about Headstart: and that is that it provides a wonderful, secure, happy and loving environment for our child. The staff are marvellous at leading the way forward but also at caring for each child: The Manager has established an atmosphere and a tone in which the children are treated very much as individuals, are thoroughly well-known and know that they are loved. Her achievement is quite remarkable: and she is extremely well supported by the other staff.

As doting parents of our only child, my husband and I were endlessly reassured by the staff when our daughter first began to attend Headstart. They never objected to our phoning to check on her: and they helped her to settle in so quickly that we were soon entirely comfortable with leaving her in their care. We have never worried about her, because she has been manifestly and uniformly keen to get to Nursery, and has always been happy and content when we have gone to pick her up. Once or twice she has been unwell, and they have contacted us when she really needed to be taken home: knowing we could trust their judgement on that has been deeply reassuring. They know our little girl very well, and really care for her: and we are dreading the day when she finally has to leave Headstart for good. If Headstart offered primary education, we would have no hesitation in placing her in their care for the next phase of her education: but as it is we can only be entirely grateful, to them for handling this first phase of her care and development so well. We would recommend Headstart with utter confidence to any parent: and wish the Nursery the very best for the future.

Dr & Mr L, Craigmillar Park