



# Hail Weston Pre-School Activity Group

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	221741
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 October 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Kelly Eyre
<b>Setting Address</b>	Hail Weston Village Hall, High Street, Hail Weston, St Neots, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE19 5JS
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<b>Registered person</b>	Hail Weston Pre School Activity Group
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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?

Hail Weston Pre-school Activity Group is run by a voluntary management committee. It opened approximately 23 years ago and operates from one main room within the village hall in Hail Weston, Cambridgeshire. A maximum of 25 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open each weekday during term-time only and sessions are from 09:30 to 12:00. There is also a lunch club from 12:00 to 13:00 each day. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 40 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school serves the local and neighbouring community. It currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and a number of children who speak English as an additional language. It is able to support children who have disabilities.

The setting employs ten members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

The pre-school has achieved the Pre-School Learning Alliance 'Aiming for Quality' accreditation award.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because the setting has highly effective procedures and practices which promote their physical, dietary and health needs. Staff have an excellent knowledge of this area and have participated in the 'Promoting Health in Pre-school's' initiative which enabled them to review their practice and ensure that they are able to promote all areas of health, including emotional well-being. Children demonstrate very good levels of independence in their personal care, for example, helping themselves to drinks and visiting the bathroom independently, remembering to wash and dry their hands thoroughly. Their understanding of the relevance of these practices is consistently promoted because staff talk with them about this and children have also participated in related topic work.

The promotion of children's overall health is supported by comprehensive policies and close attention to detail which ensures that all areas are covered. For example, there are robust procedures to ensure that parents are informed of any infections and that children who are ill do not attend the setting. Comprehensive records are kept regarding the administration of medication, with parents asked to provide details of medication administered at home in order to ensure that children are only given the correct dosage and are protected at all times. Current first aid certificates are held by six members of staff, ensuring that they can respond to accidents appropriately and immediately and are able to protect children in an emergency situation.

Children are offered healthy and nutritious snacks which include a wide range of food types, including fresh fruit and vegetables. They learn practical social skills as they sit in small groups to eat their snacks, discussing a variety of topics with each other and with staff members. Children's individual dietary needs are clearly recorded and there is a practical system for checking all needs and allergies, ensuring that children's health is protected at all times. Children attending the lunch club bring their own packed lunches. Parents are given comprehensive guidance about the types of food to include. This is further supported by a regular 'Lunch Club Newsletter' which explains healthy eating and details all food types and their properties. It also gives ideas for nutritious snacks and recipes for healthy meals. The lunch club and associated newsletter have received exceptionally positive feedback from parents who appreciate the extended hours, social opportunities for children and the newsletter information.

Children's physical health is very well promoted as they are offered an extensive range of activities and opportunities to explore and develop their physical skills and movements. They develop control of their bodies and improve their co-ordination as they participate in adult-led activities, such as music and movement sessions and action rhymes. They enjoy regular access to the outdoor play area where they pedal tricycles, use ride-on toys, push buggies and prams,

roll hoops, throw balls to knock skittles down, play hopscotch and throw quoits. Children show good skills and dexterity in the use of small tools and equipment, for example, they competently use scissors, pencils, carry out threading activities, complete puzzles and use small construction sets.

Children's individual development is very well promoted as staff are experienced, have an excellent knowledge of child development and a thorough understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. This ensures that they are able to support children in developing their physical and emotional independence, for example, enabling them to feel secure in separating from their parents and carers.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work is displayed and they are able to access the resources provided. Their ongoing safety is given a high priority and staff carry out comprehensive daily safety checks, which cover all areas such as surfaces, cleaning equipment and checking that gates and doors are locked. This helps to ensure that children are able to move around safely, freely and independently within the setting. The daily implementation of practical policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's safety in all areas. For example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised regularly to enable children to become familiar with the routine. This area is further supported because there are additional procedures such as a 'critical incident' procedure and checklist, which would ensure that children are kept safe in an emergency.

Children are gaining a good understanding about keeping themselves and others safe. They are given clear explanations by staff to help them appreciate the relevance of personal safety, for example, they understand why it is important not to run inside. This area is further reinforced because children have participated in topic work covering issues such as road safety, 'people we can trust' and fire safety. Children use toys and resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. Staff check these to ensure that they are clean and safe, accessing further guidance regarding the selection and maintenance of resources in the setting's policies. Children's welfare is effectively promoted because staff have attended additional child protection training and have a thorough understanding of this area. However, children's welfare is affected because the child protection policy does not contain current information, which would lead to a delay in taking appropriate action.

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

The provision is good.

Children come into the setting happily and are secure and settled. They are keen to explore the resources and enthusiastically participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. For example, two children eagerly talk with a member of staff about what they are going to write on their 'menus', discussing different ingredients and their likes and dislikes. New children settle well, trusting staff and becoming secure in their relationships with them because staff

make good use of the key-worker system. They take time to ensure all information is obtained from parents and carefully monitor children throughout the session to allow them time to explore but ensure that they are always aware of the routines and expectations.

Children are consistently offered a varied and interesting range of activities and play opportunities because staff have implemented comprehensive planning methods. These methods ensure that all areas of learning and development are covered and that children's play is fun, purposeful and stimulating. The planning for children aged two to three years is based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which staff use with growing confidence, clearly recognising the concept of holistic play, learning and development and the importance of providing a wide range of activities and play experiences. Staff are skilled in adapting the planning for all children and being flexible in order to meet their needs and develop their interests. For example, during a particularly busy session where staff note that children appear to be very lively and energetic, the planned music and movement session is adapted to allow more time for free movement but also to emphasise listening skills.

Children are able to make choices about their play and learning during the session because staff ensure that the resources provided are accessible, rotating toys and equipment efficiently to ensure that children are offered a wide range. Children's learning is enhanced because staff are skilled in using incidental learning opportunities. An example of this is children being taken for a visit to a nearby garden where a tree has been blown down in a storm. Children look at the size of the tree and discuss what made it fall. The atmosphere within the setting is busy yet calm, creating a positive environment for children to play and learn.

#### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a thorough knowledge of the Curriculum for the foundation stage, planning and adapting activities appropriately. Children's progress is well balanced because each child has a practical curriculum plan which is regularly reviewed by their key-worker. Staff also carry out regular mapping exercises to look at areas of the setting used by individual children and develop plans accordingly to ensure that children are encouraged to access all opportunities. Individual assessments track children's progress through the stepping stones in each area of learning. However, key assessment paperwork does not cover the more advanced stepping stones which means that children's strengths and weaknesses in these areas are not consistently recognised in order to fully promote their overall development.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities. They are offered familiar items and play opportunities which help them to become secure and confident in their play and exploration. These include activities such as play dough, sand play, reading, imaginative play and a selection of crafts and construction. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a variety of topics linked to themes, which are changed each half-term. This enables them to look more closely at subjects such as 'The Colours of Autumn', where they spin spiders' webs, learn about caring for animals, write a group poem, pretend to scurry about like animals getting ready to hibernate and discuss the weather and the different habitats of animals.

The clear planning ensures that children have good daily opportunities to develop the attitudes and abilities that help them to achieve in their learning. Their motivation to learn is promoted through exciting and interesting activities and they are confident to try new experiences such as food tasting sessions, kite-flying and participation in group discussions. Children are developing a good understanding of the values and needs of others as they work in groups, learning about listening, sharing and negotiating. For example, taking turns at using the computer and the sand tray and listening to a visitor sharing her views about her culture. They understand that other people have different views and are learning to respect these through activities which increase their understanding of this area, for example, activities connected with the celebration of Christmas, Diwali and Chinese New Year.

Children are confident to initiate conversations and understand the importance of listening to others. For example, during group time they listen to each other and discuss current news topics and events such as Bonfire Night. Children are beginning to use writing as a means of communication, writing their own name on their work and producing 'menus' for snack time. They enjoy stories and use reference books to research information, for example, looking at cookery books and talking about ingredients before writing menus. Children's opportunities to view books and the written word are promoted as there is some labelling around the setting and children also choose books to take home and share with parents and carers. Children are beginning to use numbers in a meaningful context and understand that these represent sets of objects. An example of this is a child using numbered peg boards where she counts the number of holes, finds the correct number of pegs and correctly identifies the corresponding written numeral. They are beginning to use mathematical and positional language in their daily play, describing different sizes of 'cakes' they are making in the sand and using a computer programme to guide the insect up, down, left and right.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is particularly well promoted. The children have numerous opportunities to observe, explore and question in an interesting range of activities which help form the foundation of their later learning in subjects such as geography, history, science and technology. They are able to investigate and describe simple processes and patterns, noting changes in these, for example, investigating patterns and fabrics using a microscope, and planting sunflower seeds and keeping a record of their growth. Children are encouraged to use all senses when investigating and describing objects or activities; they regularly participate in food-tasting sessions and in activities where they identify smells such as lime, lemon, blackcurrant and vinegar. They are confident in the use of information and communication technology equipment, for example, competently selecting and completing computer programmes or practising listening skills using tape recorders. Children enjoy discussing their local community and environment. Their understanding of this area is promoted through activities such as walks in the village and visits to local facilities such as the church and the nearby fire station. They are gaining an excellent awareness of their own culture and that of others through activities connected with a wide range of festivals and celebrations, and the invitation of visitors to the setting to talk about their culture and beliefs.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities and are developing a good awareness of different forms of movement. They enjoy climbing, crawling through the tunnel, walking along balance bars, jumping, playing hopscotch, action rhymes and music and movement sessions. They are developing a positive attitude towards physical exercise and an awareness of how it

can help them to stay healthy, through regular discussions and themed topic work. Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form through activities such as painting, collage-making, modelling with clay and play dough, sand play and observing how water changes when other ingredients are added. They enjoy opportunities to explore music and learn how sounds can be changed, through regular music sessions and joining in with their favourite songs and action rhymes.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children are welcomed and are offered a wealth of play and learning opportunities. Their positive daily experience of the pre-school is underpinned by the highly appropriate support they receive from staff, which ensures that all children are able to participate in all aspects of the setting. Children's individuality is respected because staff value each child and their family context. This is further supported by staff's excellent knowledge and practical experience and the relevant policies and files of information which give comprehensive yet practical guidance on a diverse range of issues, such as dealing with bereavement, emotional well-being and food-related customs.

Children are offered an extensive range of play opportunities and activities which promote their understanding of diversity and their local community and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include visits to local facilities such as the church, nearby fire station and local gardens. Visitors to the setting talk with children about their beliefs and customs which helps children to gain a realistic understanding and respect of these areas. Their participation in daily discussions, stories and songs which encompass diversity, enables children to gain a positive and meaningful knowledge of these issues.

Children's behaviour is exemplary throughout the sessions. They are confident in choosing play resources and moving from one activity to another, competently organise turn-taking and sharing. They are kind, considerate and polite to each other and to staff, taking their turn in discussions and happily helping to tidy up. Their understanding of behaviour and expectations is gently reinforced by staff, for example, children sing a 'thank you song' to the parent-helper at the end of each session. Staff have attended additional training and are highly skilled in managing children's behaviour, concentrating on the positive aspects and setting consistent boundaries. Staff act as excellent role models, always remaining calm, fair and attentive to all. Children respond very well to staff, and this extremely positive approach ensures that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified and consistently met. Staff have attended additional training and there is a detailed, practical policy relating to this area, which staff ensure is consistently and sensitively implemented. Children have realistic individual plans which relate directly to their needs and are referenced to the Foundation Stage curriculum, ensuring that their development in all areas is consistently promoted. Staff demonstrate great skill in this area, working sensitively with individual children and parents and making sure that all daily plans and activities are adapted so that each child is able to participate and be included meaningfully in all opportunities and routines. This area is further

supported because staff are able to refer to a wealth of additional supporting information and use this to inform their work and to support parents.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff are committed to involving parents fully in all aspects of the setting and in their children's learning. There is a comprehensive procedure which ensures that they are aware of all policies and practical details, enabling them to feel confident in the staff, and in turn, passing this confidence on to their children. They receive excellent information about the setting and all aspects of the Curriculum for the foundation stage, with additional information about the role of play in children's learning. They are kept exceptionally well informed of their children's progress and activities through regular newsletters, consultation evenings, daily discussions with staff and written reports. There are informative notice boards and an easily accessible parents' file containing a wealth of information about topics such as the current themes and activities, curriculum guidance, useful websites, health and safety. The setting actively seeks parents' views and acts on these, making excellent use of frequent parental questionnaires. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and highly appropriate care can be provided for each child.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. They benefit daily from the care provided by experienced, qualified staff and from their attention to detail and good organisation of all areas of the setting. Their overall care and safety are consistently promoted because there are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. Additional paperwork has been implemented by the group to support this area and demonstrate that staff and committee members have undergone appropriate checks. A clear staff induction process and ongoing monitoring and appraisals ensure that the setting's policies and procedures are understood by all and are consistently applied. This is further supported by a clear procedure for the induction of students in the setting, ensuring that they are aware of their responsibilities and are able to work appropriately and safely with all children.

Children's daily play opportunities are enhanced by the good organisation of space. Staff set out the room each day and have appropriate plans to ensure that different types of play can be accommodated and that children are able to concentrate on their activities and move safely and freely around the room. Good forward-planning ensures that staff are aware of each activity and prepare these in advance so that children's routines are uninterrupted. The clear organisation of all paperwork means that it is accessible and enables staff to check that children's needs are met and to promote their safety and welfare. Good use of an analysis of staff skills means that staff work in areas where they are skilled and experienced but are also able to share their knowledge and support each other, helping to ensure that children are always offered appropriate support and opportunities.

Leadership and management is good. Children's learning and development are enhanced and their overall welfare promoted by the very good understanding that the supervisor has of her roles and responsibilities. She continuously reviews the setting's work against the National Standards to ensure that these are consistently met, organising all paperwork and checklists



appropriately to support this. She acts as a very good role model to both staff and children, attending additional training and demonstrating her genuine enthusiasm for her work with children. The supervisor and staff have a positive attitude to reviewing their practice, regularly seeking feedback and checking through all areas of work, then setting appropriate action plans. They are well supported by a voluntary management committee who have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They have a good knowledge of the daily running of the setting and are able to provide appropriate support to the supervisor and staff. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting, where staff are happy and enthusiastic and children can learn and develop.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At their last inspection, the group was asked to update the complaints policy to include contact details of the regulator. This has now been updated and contains all relevant information, ensuring that parents are informed and children are protected.

With regard to the provision of funded early education, the group was asked to increase opportunities for children to recognise their own name. Children now have a variety of opportunities, including identifying their name cards, writing their own names on their work, and identifying their labelled book bags and coat pegs, increasing their understanding of this area. The group was asked to extend children's vocabulary. They now list key words to go with each activity, with key words for focus activities stated on the planning sheets. They have also developed procedures at circle time to enable children to discuss issues and speak in a group, thus extending their opportunities to explore and learn new vocabulary. The group was also asked to provide more opportunities for children to explore natural resources. Craft resources have been increased to include tactile and natural materials, staff put out resources for children to explore and children collect items such as conkers and identify spring flowers when out on pre-school walks. This ensures that children are offered regular opportunities to explore a wide range of resources and improve their knowledge of this area.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 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.
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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.
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## 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):

- ensure that the welfare of children is fully safeguarded by updating policies so that they contain current information.

### **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):

- further develop the assessment methods to ensure that these consistently cover all stepping stones in order to clearly identify children's individual strengths and weaknesses so that their overall development can be fully promoted.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)