

# Harthill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 303235

**Inspection date** 28 June 2007

**Inspector** Angela Howard

**Setting Address** Harthill Junior and Infant School, Pre-School Unit, Union Street, Harthill,  
Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S26 7YH

**Telephone number** 01909 774 708

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**Registered person** Harthill Pre-School

**Type of inspection** Integrated

**Type of care** Full day 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?

Harthill Pre-School opened in 1998 and is a voluntary organisation, managed by a committee of parents. It operates from a self-contained unit in the grounds of Harthill Junior and Infant School, in the village of Harthill, on the outskirts of the borough of Rotherham. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area. Children attend for a variety of sessions from the local and surrounding area.

The setting is registered to care for 20 children aged two years to five years. They are currently caring for 40 children, of which 17 three-year-olds and 16 four-year-olds are in receipt of nursery education funding.

The setting is open Mondays to Fridays school term time only from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.40 to 15.10 and the lunch club operates from 11.30 to 12.40. There is one full time and five part time members of staff working with the children. The majority of staff hold early years qualifications to at least level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority and works closely with the Foundation Stage teacher in the attached school.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of keeping themselves healthy through good procedures and consistent routines. They are aware of the need to wash hands before eating and mainly do this without being reminded; for example, they all wash their hands independently before snack and they talk to each other about washing germs away. This results in children learning about the importance of personal hygiene. A detailed, well-written policy to exclude children who are ill is routinely shared with parents. This ensures that cross-infection is minimised. Children's health is clearly supported by staff who have a good knowledge of health and hygiene procedures. The setting is very clean and effectively well maintained. Staff implement good hygiene practices, such as wearing gloves when preparing and serving food and use antibacterial spray to ensure tables and changing areas are suitably clean. Good documentation is in place for managing accidents. The manager reviews accident reports and takes appropriate steps to minimise any hazards identified. The medication records contain most of the required regulatory information but do lack minor details.

Children enjoy a well-balanced, healthy and nutritious range of snacks in accordance with parents' wishes. Clear records show any dietary requirements are adhered to and children's preferences are catered for well. They enjoy a wide range of nutritious snacks and meals, which develop their awareness of healthy eating. For example, children enjoy a very wide range of different fruits at snack time. They enjoy this time as it gives them the opportunity to enjoy their food and is a social occasion where children sit with their peers and staff, joining in conversations. It is a free-flow system for children to independently serve themselves snack when they feel ready, four days of the week. On the last day each week, all children sit together and share a hot snack, such as fish fingers and vegetables, Yorkshire pudding and gravy or rice with sweet and sour sauce.

Children enjoy an extensive range of physical activities. They thoroughly enjoy energetic, imaginative running-around games, ride bikes and scooters, climb on climbing blocks, balance on beams and catch and throw balls and beanbags. They control their bodies very well as they use a wide range of good quality physical play equipment. For example, they are very skilled in balancing on a balancing board making it rock to and fro and propelling a ride-on toy that requires two children to pedal in unison.

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

The provision is good.

The setting has very good health and safety procedures in place. For example, all exits are securely locked with keypads fitted and all visitors sign in and out of the setting. Children are very well supervised due to the effective deployment of staff and the high ratios of staff to children. Space is organised successfully to provide children with a very wide range of play opportunities in a safe environment. Therefore, children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and very secure environment. Staff are proactive in the safety of children. For example, fire evacuation procedures are practised regularly to highlight children's awareness of fire safety and the need to follow instructions. Children's awareness of their own safety is promoted effectively as staff develop children's awareness of cause and effect with clear explanations, for example, 'Don't go too fast on the scooter as you will not be able to stop if someone runs in front of you'.

Children benefit greatly from the extensive range of equipment and resources used daily in the setting. They use a very wide variety of good quality equipment which is very well organised in open, low-level storage units. This allows children to make choices in a safe manner. Toys and equipment are vigilantly monitored by staff to make sure that they remain safe and suitable for the children, in consideration of their age and stage of development.

Children are very well protected as staff have a very good understanding of their role and responsibilities with regards to child protection matters. This ensures that the setting's practice is underpinned by first class, up-to-date knowledge of possible signs of abuse and the procedures to follow.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy playing with the vast amount of good quality toys and resources. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning activities for younger children successfully. Creative and imaginative activities, such as play dough, sticking, painting and domestic role play allow children to explore, have fun and have a good level of challenge. For example, children take on domestic roles, 'just like mummy' as they iron, make tea and put the baby to bed. Staff listen attentively to children and encourage them to listen to their peers as they make party food with play dough and describe their own or a family member's party, describing the pink balloons and sandwiches. Therefore, children are becoming confident, competent little learners.

Children arrive at the setting happy and relaxed. They receive a very warm welcome and are eager to play and explore the stimulating environment. Each child receives an individual greeting from staff and the resources are set out attractively to encourage children to participate. Children make informed choices about their play and choose from a very wide range of good quality activities which provide challenge, direction and motivation. For example, they have access to a wide variety of activity based and sensory play resources, such as fishing in the water play. They mix powder paint, use glue and a wide range of collage materials to make pictures and make patterns in the sand with cars and diggers. Children respond well to the adults' calm, quiet approach and clear explanations and support. They show delight as staff laugh and play with them and are beginning to develop a sense of responsibility as they help to tidy away at the end of the session.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good understanding and strong knowledge base of the early learning goals and use this to provide a broad and balanced curriculum across the six areas of learning. This ensures children progress very well through the stepping stones. They encourage children to participate, explore, problem solve and have fun whilst learning. They know the children very well and use this knowledge to support and provide activities that are age and developmentally appropriate. Staff interact very effectively with children to stimulate their curiosity, reinforcing and consolidating their learning. This results in more motivation and challenge for children. Staff skilfully use open-ended questions to challenge children's thinking and develop their language skills. Children's contributions are highly respected as staff listen attentively and display their work attractively around the nursery.

Children's personal social and emotional development is supported very well. Children are very confident, independent and initiate plenty of good quality activities themselves. For example, they devise a game to be detectives using magnifying glasses to look for clues around the

setting. Children are eager to learn, be self-assured and confident to try out new experiences, such as mixing powder paint and water to the correct consistency for printing. As a result, children are highly motivated. Children eagerly explore a good range of media and materials, including dry sand as they pour and sieve it, describing its texture and wet sand, to print letter shapes with the letter moulds. They use clay to mould, squeeze and pummel and a vast range of junk modelling material in the self-select workshop. Children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of creative activities on offer. The vast amount of materials in the craft workshop area, such as feathers, straws, cotton wool, lollipop sticks and pasta shapes, encourage children to experiment with different materials. This enables children to create their own ideas and use their imagination to freely express themselves.

Children's speaking and listening skills are developing at a rapid pace. They make sensible and confident contributions to group time conversations and listen to each other attentively as they contribute to the discussion about the weather, days of the week and months of the year. Children listen with pleasure to stories, laughing and giggling as staff use the tone of their voice to bring the character to life in the story. After the story they repeat the sequence of events and offer their own thoughts on how hot volcanoes will be. Children have plenty of opportunities to practise mark making for a variety of purposes. For example, to label pictures, to make lists in the home corner and to make patterns and shapes in the wet sand.

Children's counting and mathematical skills are fostered very well by staff who make good use of daily routines to promote mathematical ideas. For example, children count the number of children present at register time and are sufficiently skilled to be able to add one more when someone arrives late. When talking about the date children identify that they live at number seven. Children use mathematical language freely during their play as they talk about the clay being heavy and hard, that they have made a square and that they are positioned behind someone when queuing to come back into the setting after outdoor play.

Outdoor play and physical activities promote children's physical well-being very well. They take part in weekly physical education sessions, which include using apparatus, playing team games, movement with scarves and ribbons and dancing to music. Children show interest in simple information and communication technology. They confidently use telephones as they pretend to chat inviting friends over for coffee once the baby is asleep and are adept in using the mouse to complete basic computer programs. Therefore, they use everyday technology with ease and confidence and are developing sound skills. Well-established observations by key workers help to identify areas for improvement. However, there is no formal link between assessments and planning to ensure children's individual learning is fully promoted.

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing good self-esteem and self-confidence which is supported by highly positive relationships with staff. This is due to staff giving plenty of praise and encouragement. Firm, caring friendships are evident as children seek out familiar friends and staff for support, cuddles and reassurance. In return, children respond with enthusiasm to requests from staff, such as at tidy-up time, all eagerly taking part in clearing away toys and sweeping floors. Therefore, children develop a strong sense of belonging and become familiar with daily routines and expectations. Staff work very closely with parents and carers to find out about children's individual needs to help them feel a part of the setting. Comprehensive information obtained from parents prior to any placement commencing helps children to settle very well. All children

play a full part in the setting because staff value and respect their individuality. This results in children developing self-confidence, a belief in themselves and healthy self-esteem.

Children are able to freely select resources as the environment is organised to promote their independence. Staff have a good knowledge of the setting's equal opportunities policy and the code of practice regarding caring for children with specific needs. Good communication with parents, outside agencies and staff ensures that children are well cared for, included and are making good progress. Children's awareness of equal opportunities and diversity is fostered effectively through discussion and the use of a good range of play resources. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour in all age groups is excellent. Strong adult support works extremely well. Staff reward positive behaviour by offering children an abundance of praise and encouragement and the occasional reward sticker. Children are provided with very clear explanations and are supported to manage their own behaviour, such as taking turns, and are learning to cooperate with their peers successfully. Therefore, children are learning right from wrong in an extremely warm and caring environment.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff make time to talk to parents daily about their child's experiences and encourage them to share their expertise about their own child. A regular newsletter and the parents' notice board keep parents well informed about the curriculum and offer suggestions for continuing the learning at home. Parents are able to access their child's progress records at any time. Children clearly benefit from the positive partnership that has developed with parents, as it supports links with home and increases the children's sense of belonging. This results in children being happy and well cared for and ensures they make good progress towards the early learning goals.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Comprehensive and robust recruitment procedures are in place. This ensures children are cared for by suitable staff who are appropriately vetted. The deployment of caring, sensitive staff increases children's feelings of safety and security because it ensures children are cared for by a key person who builds trusting relationships with the children and their families. Very good team work makes sure all staff work together in a highly effective manner to promote children's health, enjoyment and welfare. Therefore, children are comfortable in the predictable environment and move around with confidence making decisions about their own play.

A highly comprehensive range of policies and procedures, which contribute to children's health and safety are in place and regularly reviewed and shared with parents. Staff are very committed and attend a vast amount of training. For example, understanding children's behaviour, food hygiene, multicultural awareness and a variety of courses on caring and working with children. The manager has just completed a senior management course. Children's experiences are, therefore, enhanced as staff access good training and development opportunities. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the educational provision is good. Clear aims for children's care and learning are shared effectively with staff and parents and are reflected in the day-to-day operation of the setting. Staff receive clear direction and line management responsibilities are carried out in a highly effective manner. For example, staff are well supported with regular opportunities to meet together and are given plenty of opportunities to attend further training.

The early years manager has a hands-on approach and works alongside staff as part of the ratios. This enables her to monitor the quality of teaching and identify training needs. Pre-school staff work cooperatively with other professionals, such as local development workers and staff working in the Foundation unit on the school site. Therefore, children's learning is enhanced and this ensures they make good progress.

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

At the last inspection four recommendations were made. These related to documentation and the improvement of hand washing facilities for children.

The daily attendance register now reflects children's times of arrival and departure and medication records contain parents' acknowledgment that medication has been administered. The child protection statement now includes the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff or volunteer. Therefore, children's safety is promoted. The hand washing facilities ensure children can always wash their hands in a hygienic manner. Therefore, children's health is promoted.

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

Since the last inspection 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):

- improve documentation relating to the administration of medication.

#### **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):

- improve the links between children's assessments, planning and the stepping stones.

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)