

# Helpston Playhouse And Under Fives Pre-School & Out of School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	256770
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Denise May Smith
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Mobile John Clare Primary School, West Street, Helpston, Peterborough, Cambs, PE6 7DU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01733 253243
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Helpston Playhouse And Under Fives Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Helpston Playhouse, Under Fives Pre-school and Out of School Club opened in 1972. They operate from a purpose built mobile in the grounds of John Clare Primary School in Helpston, Peterborough and has done so since 1995. The setting serves the local community and surrounding villages.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school or out of school club at any one time. The pre-school opens daily from 09.15 until 12.15, term time only. There are currently 19 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school employs three members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

The out of school club opens from 08.00 until 08.50 and 15.30 until 17.30, except on a Friday when the club opens at 14.30, term time only. There are currently 30 children on roll, of these five are under the age of eight. The out of school club employs three members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate play work qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children in both the out of school club and the pre-school are well cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where they begin to learn about the importance of good hygiene and personal care throughout their daily routine. Consistent adult support and guidance helps children to gain a good understanding of hygiene and become increasingly independent in their personal care, for example, washing their hands before snacks, after messy play and after using the toilet. Children are well protected from the spread of cross infection due to staff's vigilance and well maintained procedures for cleaning. For example, staff disinfect the tables before and after snack times. An effective nappy changing routine is followed with all staff wearing gloves, wiping down changing mats after use and ensuring nappies are disposed of hygienically. A clear written policy regarding sick children, and the effective recording of all accidents and emergency contacts, promotes children's health and well-being. However, the wording whereby parents give consent for emergency treatment is not written in line with the National Standards which does not underpin the care provided. Staff hold relevant first aid certificates and easy access to well stocked first aid kits, which positively safeguards children.

Children enjoy a good range of fun activities which contribute to their good health. Children who attend both groups enjoy a range of physical activities which help promote their physical development and help them gain increasing control over their bodies. For example, children enjoy bouncing on the trampoline and go for walks to collect items for their nature table. Staff's commitment to the promotion of physical activity helps children to keep fit and to learn that exercise is lots of fun.

Staff actively promote healthy eating, working closely with parents to ensure that children's individual dietary needs are well met. Children in the breakfast club enjoy a range of foods such as croissants and American pancakes prior to going to school. In the after school club they are provided with hot food such as pasta or jacket potatoes. Pre-school children choose when they wish to eat their snack and happily sample a variety of raw vegetables and a range of fresh fruit. Snack time is well planned ensuring that children gain good social skills. For example, they sit together with their friends at a dedicated table and engage in conversation about what they have been doing, with each other and their family. Children have free access to drinks throughout the session to ensure they do not become thirsty.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure environment where they are supervised closely by staff at all times. This enables the children to move freely and independently. Children are well protected because the setting has good safety procedures which are understood and effectively implemented by staff. They have a good understanding of the action to be taken regarding a lost or uncollected child. There are effective security systems for entry into the building, and both the arrival and collection of the children is well planned. There is an up to date record in place of persons with permission to collect children, and parents let staff know if there is someone different collecting the children. This helps keep children safe.

Internally, many safety measures have been taken with smoke alarms, a fire blanket and socket covers in place. Staff are vigilant regarding safety and effectively implement procedures to

minimise risks. They ensure that risk assessments of the facilities and resources are carried out each day, prior to the children's arrival and involve the children in assessing the safety of the garden so that they develop their knowledge of keeping safe. For example, two children returned from the garden with a member of staff and announced to the group 'it is a bit cold outside so you will need your coats on, there are a lot of leaves so be careful not to slip and do not use the hexagons as they are not safe'. Children proceeded to wrap up in their coats, go outside where they were provided with small brooms to sweep the leaves. The children had a lovely time filling up a large box with the leaves they had collected.

Electrical and fire safety equipment is regularly checked and kept in a safe condition and there are good fire safety procedures in place, with up to date records of practise evacuations which are evaluated to inform their future practice. Outings are effectively managed and include risk assessments, maintaining ratios, carrying a mobile phone and contact details, as well as taking other appropriate equipment, such as medicine and first aid kits. Written consent from parents is obtained prior to any outing. The children also learn road safety in pre-school which is reinforced when children go on walks around the locality.

Staff help children to develop an awareness of the need to preserve their own well-being and that of others. This is achieved by gentle reminders from staff, such as requests to pick up toys from the floor in case someone trips on them. Children respond very well to these requests and it helps them begin to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe.

Children are protected by staff who are confident and secure in their knowledge of child protection policies and procedures. Suitable information and a clear written policy are in place which ensures children's welfare is appropriately protected. Any injury that children currently arrive with at the pre-school is not consistently recorded which does not protect staff or inform the child protection practice. All staff have undertaken safeguarding children courses. However, the designated person for child protection has not yet completed the advanced course which gives her a more in-depth knowledge of this subject.

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

The provision is good.

Children who attend the pre-school and the out of school club all receive a good standard of care, learning and support. Children in the out of school club help to plan and devise their own activities. For example, they choose which country they wish to hypothetically visit next week on their around the world journey and suggest what activities could be included in this visit to 'Mexico'. The children have opportunities to complete their homework if they wish, supported by the staff, or take part in activities such as making animal models out of fruit and vegetables.

Staff build caring relationships with children. Children in the pre-school are given lots of support to help them settle quickly daily and into the group generally as they begin their journey through pre-school. They benefit from the staff's sensitive and calm approach to their care. A welcoming, stimulating and inclusive environment is created, where all children are acknowledged and respected as individuals. Children interact with staff in a relaxed and warm manner and they build close relationships with their peers. For example, children organise their play together in the role play area, deciding where they are going to drive to in their car and who is going to drive.

Staff have a good awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are implementing it in their planning for children under three. Staff are highly motivated and have a good

knowledge of childcare and development. This has a positive impact on children's learning and achievements, as staff support them to see ways to extend their play and encourage them to maintain concentration and develop confidence. As a result children are confident and have high self-esteem.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are given good opportunities to participate in a wide range of new and stimulating experiences and they are encouraged to take an active role in the group.

Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and the six areas of learning. Key workers gather information about children's interests and regularly monitor and observe children as they participate in activities. They use this collective information to inform future activities, ensuring they are sensitive to the differing needs of each child. Staff use effective teaching methods and tools. For example, they make good use of open-ended questions to encourage children to extend their thoughts and ideas and to solve simple problems. Staff prepare well for the sessions and ensure that there is a broad range of activities in keeping with the six areas of learning, whilst achieving a balance between planned activity and additional free play. Staff manage children effectively, valuing their contributions and adapting activities to ensure that all children are able to participate.

Staff have a sound understanding of how children gain independence and they are given the freedom to explore and investigate through a range of stimulating activities. Weekly plans are organised to allow for flexibility and spontaneity, which gives scope for each child to choose what they want to do and introduce their own ideas. In addition, the well planned layout of the main playroom allows all children easy access to a wide range of stimulating and good quality resources, encouraging them to make independent choices, allowing their play to evolve naturally and at their own pace.

Staff communicate well with children, using clear and simple language, which in turn helps children to learn and develop well. Children show good speaking and listening skills as they take turns to speak during circle time, talking about their 'show and tell' item. Children are able to express themselves clearly and have a developing vocabulary. Children thoroughly enjoy listening to, and taking part in stories. Staff encourage children to be involved and make predictions as to what might happen next. Children successfully find their names and pictures on their self-registration cards as they enter the pre-school and use these cards, which offer extension for more able children as their second names are added, during routine activities throughout the session. Children have frequent opportunities to practise early writing skills as they play.

Children are enthusiastic learners. They thoroughly enjoy serving pretend food to each other in the home corner and making models out of play dough using a variety of rollers and cutters. Children of all ages have good opportunities to represent and experiment using a good range of media, such as paint and play dough. This introduces them to the concepts of colour, texture and form.

Children have a positive attitude to activities and are eager to take part. All children help to tidy up when asked by staff, they know where things go and successfully put toys away. Children show developing independence, putting on their own coats and Wellington boots and pouring their own drinks at snack time.

Children use lots of mathematical language during a range of activities, such big, medium and small, full and empty, top and bottom. Staff encourage children to recognise shapes, use numbers and count in everyday play. For example, children complete puzzles and count the number of children present. Children enjoy finding a pair of Wellington boots, finding the matching colour, identifying the size of the boot and a left and a right boot.

Children have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, they thoroughly enjoy exploring the bugs found in the garden with magnifying glasses and collecting objects for their Autumn table as they go for a nature walk. This learning is successfully extended into the home as children make collages of an Autumn tree which they proudly return to pre-school where staff add them to the display. The provision of reference books at the interest tables provides further opportunities for children to learn about the world around them. Children have access to a computer, however, this is rarely used and so does not underpin children's learning.

Children have lots of opportunity to use large physical equipment and to manipulate small tools freely. For example, during active play they confidently climb the slide and participate in running games. They use rolling pins, glue spreaders, pencils and crayons successfully. Children are also able to express themselves freely and creatively through a very good range of media and activities, such as paint, collage, sand, three-dimensional model making, dough, music and movement. All children are well supported and well challenged.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the staff's positive attitude towards equal opportunities and respecting individual and differing needs, as they lead by example. There are good opportunities to learn about the world around them and their local community through a variety of planned activities, such as going on local nature walks and on trips further afield. Children gain an awareness of other cultures as children participate in a range of celebrations, including Chinese New Year and Diwali, as well as more familiar festivals, such as Christmas and Easter. Children in the out of school club learn about other countries through food tasting and art activities. Children have access to a range of multi-cultural toys, books and images that reflect positive non-stereotypical roles, racial and cultural diversity and disability.

Staff work hard to ensure that the individual needs of all children are met and that they are cared for in a consistent and appropriate manner, collecting good comprehensive information from parents in order to achieve this.

Staff are calm, competent and good role models. They sensitively support, praise and encourage all children, promoting their self-esteem, confidence and sense of belonging. Children are polite, well behaved and enthusiastic to take part in all aspects of pre-school life. Children listen and respect staff, and appropriate supervision ensures that all children are beginning to learn right from wrong and how to share and be kind to one another. Good behaviour is reinforced through praise and positive, age-appropriate methods of behaviour management. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The pre-school is proactive in working with children with learning difficulties and disabilities and as a result all children are well supported and fully included in the setting. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of individual children and are committed to working with

parents and relevant outside agencies so that specific care and education is provided for all children.

The partnership with the parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Staff clearly recognise the importance of working closely with parents to ensure that children's needs are well met. Parents receive good quality, comprehensive written information about the setting and the policies and procedures which are in place. Copies of these are made available to parents as well as lots of other relevant literature. For example, activity plans, risk assessments and the registration and insurance certificates are all clearly displayed. Parents have access to their child's records which includes information about their child's observations of achievements. All parents receive regular verbal feedback from the staff at the end of each session and attend a termly parents meeting where their children's progress is discussed. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning. This enables staff to work in partnership with parents and ensures that children's needs are met.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Staff take an extremely professional approach to their work, a fact reflected in all aspects of pre-school life, including the well-organised layout of the room, the effective safety measures taken and the good range of activities and opportunities available to the children.

Detailed and informative notice boards are available to keep parents informed about what is happening in the pre-school and the out of school club. A good, detailed range of policies and procedures, such as child protection, behaviour management and equal opportunities, are used to inform practice and protect the welfare of the children who attend. There are well maintained and effective recording systems for medication administration, accidents and allergies. These are all meticulously kept, monitored and stored confidentially. The group maintains a detailed children's register. However, staff do not consistently record when they are present, and visitors to the group are not clearly recorded, making it difficult to 'at a glance' see how many adults are present in the event of an emergency. All staff are subject to rigorous recruitment, vetting and induction procedures. This ensures that they are very aware of their roles and responsibilities, and confirms their suitability to work with children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The supervisor and committee are committed to the staff and children and this is reflected in the effective management of the setting. Regular meetings offer staff opportunities to discuss training needs as well as issues concerning any of the children for whom they are key worker. The educational planning and assessment systems are well organised and aim to meet the individual needs of the children who attend. The committee, supervisor and staff team are committed to improvement and an ethos of reflective practice, working closely together to identify areas for further development and strategies to achieve this. Priority is given to ongoing personal development and staff are well supported and given clear direction. All staff are well motivated, ensuring that the care of the children and the service delivered is of good quality.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the committee agreed to ensure procedures to be followed in the event of allegations of abuse being made against staff members is included the child protection

policy of the pre-school and out of school club. This is now in place and has improved the quality of the policies which underpin the care provided.

At the last nursery education inspection the committee agreed to ensure all opportunities are explored for children to practise their counting skills in routine activities. Children's awareness of early mathematics are now well supported across all activities and daily routines.

### **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):

- ensure that the consent obtained allowing emergency medical advice and or treatment to be sought is written in line with the National Standards
- ensure that the designated person for child protection has completed a relevant training course and record any existing injuries that children may arrive with
- ensure that a daily record is consistently maintained of the adults who look after the children and ensure records clearly show how many adults, including visitors, are on the premises.

#### **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 systems to manage the use of equipment such as the computer so that this resource can be used effectively to promote children's understanding and learning.

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)