

Harpenden Pre-School and Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY3 12940
Inspection date 30/03/2009
Inspector Jill Nugent

Setting address Harpenden Preparatory School, 53 Luton Road, Harpenden,
Hertfordshire, AL5 2UE

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Harpenden Pre-School and Nursery is owned and managed by Asquith Nurseries Limited. The provision registered in 2005 and operates from seven rooms in a converted house with two outbuildings. Access to the house and outbuildings is at ground level by means of a series of footpaths and there is an internal staircase leading to the two upstairs rooms. Children share access to three outdoor play areas.

The pre-school and nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 84 children in the early years age group may attend the Pre-School and Nursery at any one time. Currently there are 126 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The setting is open from 07:30 until 18:00 every weekday for 51 weeks of the year.

The pre-school and nursery employs 21 members of staff to work with the children and of these, 15 staff, including the manager, hold a Level 3 early years qualification. The provision supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding. The pre-school and nursery offers a particularly welcoming and inclusive service where children make significant progress in their learning. Staff provide a wide range of stimulating play activities for all children in attractive indoor and outdoor play areas. There is an emphasis on high quality care and an excellent partnership with parents and other professionals contributes to children's individual needs being met successfully. Children are extremely happy in the setting and thrive in a safe and challenging environment. Efficient systems for monitoring and evaluating staff's practice ensure that the setting continually improves the outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- develop further the culture of reflective practice within the setting through involving all staff in the ongoing process of self-evaluation
- develop further the system for observational assessment in order to show more clearly children's progress towards the early learning goals.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The nursery and pre-school is managed effectively through a commitment to strong leadership, delegation and teamwork. The manager is proactive in setting up innovative systems to support staff's professional development and to ensure that they implement policies and procedures correctly. All the required paperwork is in place and the setting works very closely with parents in all aspects of children's care and education. Parents receive detailed information about the provision and are invited to regular consultations and open events. Attractive displays in the playrooms offer a visual picture of children enjoying and achieving in different ways. Staff exchange information daily with parents and work with external agencies so that they continue to offer all children appropriate care. There are exemplary systems in place regarding safeguarding, including strict procedures for the collection of children.

The manager encourages reflective practice amongst staff, giving them particular areas on which to focus and work towards improving. For example, they have recently worked on developing the partnership with parents and resourcing the outdoor play areas. This emphasis on continuing evaluation and development impacts positively on the outcomes for children. The room supervisors are confident in their roles and achieve a consistent approach across the whole provision. The manager monitors the standard of care and education in each room to ensure that the high quality is maintained. She has begun to use self-evaluation to highlight aspects requiring further development within the provision and is keen to involve all staff in this process. Inclusion is promoted throughout the setting through the emphasis on responding carefully to children's individual needs. Children are encouraged to be aware of diversity through taking part in activities linked to religious and cultural events.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children enjoy spacious and interesting play areas where they can explore freely with adult support. They show much interest in the wide range of indoor and outdoor resources, organised so as to be easily accessible to all children. Staff join in and interact with children effectively, allowing them freedom to participate in play activities within a closely supervised environment. As a result children have excellent opportunities for active learning and the acquisition of new skills. They gain self-confidence in making choices and respond positively to new ideas. They explore independently, often becoming absorbed in their play, and also explore with others as they learn to work together. For example, younger children create pictures and models, and have fun dressing up, whereas older children find out how to build walls and grow plants. Staff encourage children to communicate and reinforce their learning in literacy and numeracy through focused adult-led activities. Children of all ages especially enjoy good opportunities to share books, rhymes and songs.

Staff have comprehensive systems in place for observing children's learning and identifying their next steps. By using a weekly overview of each child's

development, staff plan activities to meet children's individual learning needs. The system works exceptionally well in enabling staff to focus children's learning and move them on according to their stages of development, although children's overall progress is not always clearly evidenced. Parents receive termly updates on their children's development in the six areas of learning and are encouraged to input their own views. In this way staff are able to improve their support for individual children. They plan activities which interest and challenge children, for instance, increasing their use of language, number recognition and hand-eye coordination. Activities include outdoor games and nature walks, sensory activities such as music making and water play, and visits from the police and firefighters. Staff continually extend topics of interest in order to extend children's learning, for example, building a weather station to learn more about the weather.

Staff ensure that children are cared for in safe and healthy surroundings. They are rigorous concerning the safety and security of the premises and carry out thorough risk assessments to ensure all potential risks to children are minimised. There are numerous checks in place which contribute effectively to maintaining the cleanliness and comfort of the rooms and also promoting children's well-being. Children are becoming aware of the benefits of healthy lifestyles as they eat nutritious meals and enjoy much fresh air and exercise. Very young children are encouraged to develop physical skills safely as they use steps, slides and tunnels. Older children join in outdoor activities enthusiastically, for example, travelling between points in different ways. They have an increasing awareness of personal safety and good hygiene practice. They are aware of their boundaries and learn to behave responsibly. Staff manage children's behaviour effectively using shadowing techniques and encouraging children to solve disputes through negotiation. They prioritise children's welfare and consequently children develop a real sense of belonging.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.