

Highways at Hamstreet Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 127250
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Inspector Elizabeth Dickson

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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 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

Highways at Hamstreet Kindergarten opened in 2001 and is managed by a committee. It operates from a building within the grounds of Hamstreet Primary School. There is one main play room, cloakroom facilities and a large enclosed play area outside. The children are also able to use parts of the school building, such as the dining room. Links with the school have been established.

The setting is on the Early Years Register, and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 21 children in the early years age group may attend at any one time. There are currently 60 children aged from two years to four years on roll. The setting operates daily from 08:45 to 15:30. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or difficulties, and those who speak English is an additional language.

The setting employs nine staff members. All have relevant early years qualifications, however, some members only work over the lunch time period.

The setting receives support from an early years advisory teacher. It is a member of the Pre School Learning Alliance, Learning through Landscapes, and a member of the Leading Early Years Team for Kent.

The facilities can be accessed by those with a physical disability.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding. All children, whatever their background or level of ability, are valued and have their needs met by knowledgeable, well-qualified and caring staff. Children are very happy and settled, and make rapid progress towards the early goals, because a stimulating range of learning experiences is provided. Excellent relationships exist between the staff, parents and primary school. The setting has moved from strength to strength since the last inspection, and because of strong leadership, has excellent capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- continue to evaluate how well the setting is running on a regular basis, and use staff expertise to build on the current strengths in its partnership with parents and the school

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The inspirational leadership of the nursery leader, supported by a strong and loyal team of highly skilled and dedicated staff, underpin the success of Highways. They provide exceptional care and many opportunities for children's learning and development.

Staff develop excellent relationships with parents and other practitioners. Parents receive a wealth of information on the setting, the curriculum and their child's welfare and progress. They are invited to participate in their children's learning by completing a 'Golden Moments' book, recording information and photographs of the child at home. Parents are particularly appreciative that their child is treated as an individual and made to feel valued. They know that any queries or concerns will be addressed swiftly. One parent praised the 'open, friendly environment', while another said, 'It's fantastic, I wouldn't choose anywhere else'. Innumerable parents and grandparents show their gratitude by giving support through serving on the committee, helping on outings, attending workshops or exercising their practical skills in gardening, painting or construction.

The close links, including ongoing communication and shared activities, with the on-site school ensure that the transfer from nursery to reception class is a smooth and seamless process for all concerned. Staff support systems are very good and they have a highly successful partnership with the committee. This leads to improvements which further enhance children's experiences, for instance, in making the building as attractive a learning environment as possible. The close links with outside agencies such as the Speech and Language service ensure that all children's needs are met.

All children benefit from the staff's clear understanding of safeguarding issues, and the excellent procedures in place to train all adults in this important aspect of their work. All staff are suitably vetted, and detailed health and safety risk assessments routinely carried out. Regular meetings provide staff with opportunities to discuss individual children's progress and identify any particular needs. The setting is reflective and evaluates its practice regularly and rigorously. Staff tirelessly explore ways to extend their understanding of early years practice and guidance.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

All children make outstanding progress in their learning and development because of a well-planned curriculum that provides an inclusive and stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors. Staff give a high priority to children's welfare and to developing relationships. Regular communication with parents, together with daily observations and assessments of children's progress ensures a thorough knowledge of what each child can do. This enables them to plan for future learning successfully, devising a 'play plan' for each individual child covering all areas of learning. Staff go out of their way to accommodate individual children's interests. For example, the current topic on frogs was prompted by the donation of frogspawn from one family!

When children arrive at Highways they leave their parents happily and settle quickly. Staff welcome them and their parents warmly, give them a high level of time and attention, clearly relishing 'getting down on the floor' to play with them. Children develop their imaginations as they play with a wide range of resources and join in with a rich variety of activities. They are enthusiastic, happy learners because the setting provides an exciting multi-sensory curriculum.

The award winning outside area is used in all weathers, to maximum effect to develop children's learning. It is a stimulating, captivating environment, designed to encourage hands-on learning, creative play and problem solving. Here, children get absorbed in myriad activities, for example, having a tea party in the 'twigwam', being enthralled by the tadpoles in the 'pond' or exploring and devising construction tasks in the digging area. There is a good balance of adult and child led activities. For example, one adult-led activity was 'metal detecting' using numbered frogs with paper clips attached.

The indoor area is well-organised and attractively decorated with colourful displays of children's work. Resources are accessible to children so that they can make choices in their play. Staff extend children's knowledge of diversity through, exploring the backgrounds and cultural differences of the parents. Those for whom English is an additional language are given good support in language acquisition. All the children play well together. Staff ensure that each child feels a valued member of the group. They are aware of those children who require support in accessing particular activities and provide them with affectionate reassurance. Makaton signs and pictorial posters are used to help all children understand the routines and foster security in their environment.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through gentle reminders offered to them during the session, such as reminding them how to handle scissors correctly. They understand that they wash their hands prior to eating, and learn to make healthy choices as snacks and lunches are nutritious. This helps to promote the understanding of a healthy life style. Water is always available. Visits, both locally and beyond, give the children a strong awareness of their own environment.

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?	1
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?	1
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

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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