

Playaway Nursery School at Herne Bay High School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY368662
Inspection date	07/10/2009
Inspector	Cilla Rachel Mullane
Setting address	Herne Bay High School, Bullockstone Road, HERNE BAY, Kent, CT6 7NS
Telephone number	01227 742 678
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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.

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Description of the setting

Playaway Nursery School at Herne Bay High School opened in 2008. It is located in a building within the grounds of a secondary school in Greenhill, Herne Bay. The nursery school operates from two classrooms, and there is also an office, staff room and toilets. The setting is on one floor and there is a toilet for people with disabilities. The nursery school serves the local area.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for 40 children under eight years, of whom 40 may be in the early years age group, and of these, none may be under two years. There are currently 51 children on roll, 31 of whom are in receipt of government funding.

The nursery school is open for 48 weeks of the year, each weekday from 09.00 to 15.30. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language. There are 11 staff working with the children, including the manager and deputy manager. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are met effectively, as practitioners get to know children's individual needs and interests, and then plan carefully to help them progress. Children feel very safe within the setting, and therefore are able to make the most of resources and experiences they are settled, and are enthusiastic learners. The environment indoors is well-planned to enable children to make choices and learn at their own pace. Continuous improvement is maintained, as management are committed to change and development, staff are offered regular training opportunities to develop their knowledge and practice, and self-evaluation results in well targeted action to improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the use of the outside area and outdoor resources, so that children can explore and be physically active, and enjoy outdoor activities across all areas of learning
- review and update policies and procedures

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The managers and staff are committed to providing a good service to children and their families, and continually monitor and evaluate all aspects of the setting in order to develop and make improvements. For example, the layout of the rooms has evolved and developed, and improvements have led to a calmer busier atmosphere, and all resources well organised and readily accessible to children. Managers use staff appraisals very positively to acknowledge staff's abilities and skills, and to identify training needs. Staff regularly attend training courses to keep their knowledge up to date, which leads to improved care and education for children. For example, they have attended Cued Articulation training to help their work with children who have speech and language difficulties. Training about using observations to inform planning has led to improved planning for individual children. All required documentation is well-maintained. Management are currently reviewing all the setting's policies and procedures, and ensuring all staff are familiar with them by introducing them at staff meetings. However, some are still out of date.

Resources within the nursery are plentiful and varied, promoting all areas of learning. Children are able to self-select and initiate their own play, for example, choosing from a wide range of creative materials. Staff deployment is good: extra staff above the minimum required ratio enables them to supervise carefully, support children's learning effectively, and have time to complete records. Currently the outside area is not used to its full potential, and free flow to outside is not facilitated: plans are in progress to rectify this.

Safeguarding procedures are effective in protecting children, and protecting staff from allegations. For example, staff whose Criminal Record Bureau checks are not yet completed know that they must not put themselves at risk by being alone with children, and other staff ensure that new staff and students are not left with children while they attend to other duties.

Staff establish friendly and supportive relationships with parents, who feel well informed and are aware of their child's key person. Parents meet with staff termly in order to discuss their children's progress, and see and contribute to their records. Therefore their views are respected, they receive information about the EYFS learning and development requirements, and staff know about children's home lives so that they can better respond to their needs and interests. Where children attend other settings, such as pre-schools, staff liaise with them to find out about children's progress and behaviour, so that continuity of care is achieved.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children make good progress from their individual starting points. Staff get to know their key children well, and are therefore able to identify how they learn, and provide activities accordingly. For example, if a child enjoys water play, a range of

water activities are provided to promote development in all areas of learning. Children are observed in their play, these observations are recorded and illustrated with photographs, and are used to plan their next steps. Therefore children make good progress towards the early learning goals, and enjoy activities tailored to their individual needs. Staff liaise with other agencies, such as the area Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), to effectively plan to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A great deal of thought has been given to the learning environment in both of the nursery rooms. As a result, children can move around freely, access all the toys and equipment and make choices, initiate their own learning as they choose activities which interest them, and take time to persevere, concentrate, and achieve a desired result. Staff are skilled at supporting and extending children's play, they ask challenging questions and model learning by thinking out loud about what they are doing. Some activities are adult led, but mostly children take charge of their own learning, and are given time to explore and investigate.

Children are able to describe what they enjoy about coming to nursery, and mention their friends, painting and drawing, and they can name favourite staff. Their personal, social and emotional development is well promoted. They form friendships, and drag over a chair to write in a book with a friend. They want to help each other, and are happy to take turns, for example, at snack time. Children concentrate and persevere, proudly calling out 'I've done it' as they finish a puzzle, or remove a tough nail from the woodwork bench. They are therefore proud of their achievements, self-esteem increases, and they are motivated and confident to try new skills. They behave well, and are proud to show others their reward stickers, and discuss what they did to earn them, for example, helping to clean a table, or tidying up. Therefore children are learning that it is good to be helpful and kind. They are starting to acknowledge and understand the feelings of others, as staff discuss with them how others feel: for example, if a child frightens and upsets another by noisily knocking down a tower of bricks, staff try to help them understand how this feels. This is reinforced by the use of puppets with faces showing different emotions: children try to pull scared and angry faces, and then go to the mark-making table to draw happy and sad faces.

Children's communication and language skills increase as they discuss how paint feels 'warm and slimy' on their hands, and as they request and sing their favourite nursery rhymes. They join in enthusiastically when staff read 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. Small children enjoy painting, and are confident to ask staff to help with their aprons. Toddlers make the most of their well equipped role play area, with a realistic kettle and toaster. Older children develop their role play well, for example, making appointments in a book and then 'painting' adults' nails pink with a cup of water and paint brushes. Hearts the bear goes on holiday with children, and they discuss his travels on his return, looking at maps, helping children learn about the world around them, and to respect families which are different to their own. Information and communication technology skills are helped by the availability of a computer and 'vtech'; children concentrate at games, and develop good mouse skills.

Good consideration is given to children's welfare. Children feel safe and secure

within the nursery. They approach staff and ask for a hug, and are able to bring their comforters to help them settle. Some children have photographs of their families in their drawers, which they can access if needed. Staff feel it is important to establish friendly relationships with parents, so that children feel reassured when they see them chatting. Hearts the bear, and Daphne the penguin go home with children, and their experiences are recorded in words and in photographs, promoting a sense of belonging, and establishing links between home and nursery. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe, as staff remind them how to behave when using the climbing frame. They know why the safety mats are in place: in case they fall.

Children are helped to make healthy choices at snack time, as they help to cut up fruit and vegetables such as cucumber, banana and apple. Small children describe liking cheese and grapes, and staff remind them why these foods are good for them. They independently access drinks from the water dispenser, keeping themselves hydrated. Children play in the fresh air often, and have access to some large apparatus indoors when staff set this up. However, free flow to the outside area is not available, and indoor activities are not always readily available outside.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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