

Hawkslade Farm Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY311978
Inspection date 10/12/2009
Inspector Susan Marriott

Setting address Hawkslade Farm Community Centre, Barley Crescent,
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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

Hawkslade Farm Pre-school opened in 2005 under the present ownership and operates from a community centre in Hawkslade Farm, in Aylesbury. The setting is run by a private partnership. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The setting receives funding for early education. It is open on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays during school term-time. Morning sessions are from 9.30am to 12 noon. Children may stay for lunch until 12.30pm. Afternoon sessions begin at 12.30pm and run until 2.30pm and older children may attend the lunch club from 12 noon. Some children may attend from 9.30am until 2.30pm.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 32 places and there are currently 52 children attending who are within this age group. The setting is also registered on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The setting serves the local and neighbouring communities. The setting provides for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are eight staff members, including the joint managers, of whom five hold relevant childcare qualifications and three are working towards qualification. One member of staff is working towards Early Years Professional status. The pre-school is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

This is a friendly and inclusive setting where the children make good progress in their learning and development. Staff sustain high quality interaction with children to draw learning from play and promote positive attitudes to learning. Most aspects of children's welfare are promoted well although there is an occasional minor weakness in the security precautions. Strong partnerships with parents and carers mean that staff have a good knowledge of each child's needs, although planning is sometimes inconsistent and observational assessments are not always updated with sufficient frequency to secure children's progress. The partners and staff have a positive approach to continuous improvement and have begun to develop self-assessment procedures to support the ongoing review of their work.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that the identity of any visitors is checked
- lead and encourage a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children
- improve the consistency of planning and the consistency and frequency of on-going observational assessment, to inform planning for each child's

continuing development through play-based activities using the Practice Guidance criteria. Use the information gained to ensure that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Required policies, procedures and paperwork are in place to support the promotion of children's welfare and the setting staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to protect children appropriately. Appropriate vetting checks are carried out on every staff member. However, staff do not always check the identity of visitors before admitting them to the setting. This impacts upon the efficiency of safeguarding procedures and potentially compromises children's safety. Regular risk assessments and daily checks ensure that hazards are minimised. Good daily practice, such as talking about carrying scissors safely and regular fire evacuation drills reinforce children's understanding of safety issues.

Whilst the staff have to set out and pack away the equipment on a daily basis, the setting makes effective and efficient use of the building and resources to promote children's learning and development across all areas of learning. Children have free flow access to the outdoor play area and advanced plans are in place to offer children an extended range of opportunities across the six areas of learning. Continuity of staffing is a key strength and this team work well together, are well-trained and deployed effectively to provide individualised support to their key children. When staff members attend external training, information is cascaded to colleagues, ensuring that knowledge and good practice is shared appropriately. For example, a staff member has established a 'language group' with the expressed intention of meeting the needs of an increasing number of children who benefit from additional support. This helps to create a positive environment, where children feel secure and happy.

Managers and staff have a clear understanding of anti-discrimination, enabling them to implement appropriate policies and provide a service which is inclusive for all children and their families. Good communication with parents means that staff are able to work well in partnership with them. Parents receive information about the setting and their child's progress through newsletters, daily talks with staff and review meetings with key workers. Parents are encouraged to contribute towards their child's 'Learning Journal'. The setting has effective partnership links with other professionals, such as speech therapists and local schools. Managers within the setting demonstrate a clear vision for the future and have begun to self-evaluate to drive continuous improvement.

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

Children make good progress in all areas of learning and are well-supported in their achievements because staff have enthusiastically embraced the spirit and intentions of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have developed appropriate

procedures for observing and assessing children although the system is not yet sufficiently embedded to fully secure children's progress. For example, there is some inconsistency between different key workers in the frequency and methods of recording their observations of children's learning and in the use of information gathered to establish children's starting points. Observation is not always closely matched to the Practice Guidance criteria. Nevertheless, staff know the children well and provide appropriate support, using their knowledge to inform activity planning and ensuring that children are offered activities that promote their individual development. Confident staff encourage children to explore and develop their own play, sensitively intervening to extend children's thinking and understanding. This means that children take an active role in their own learning and develop positive attitudes to this.

The environment is made attractive and set out with defined areas which support the six areas of learning. Excellent use is made of the entrance foyer, which becomes a valuable source of information for parents and enables children to have their own named coat peg and storage basket. Equipment is generally accessible, enabling children to make independent choices. For example, children playing on the car mat extend their play by choosing additional figures and a construction set. Children's enjoyment is enhanced and their learning effectively extended because staff join in appropriately with their play and discussions. As children participate in a recycled material modelling activity, staff speak clearly and calmly at all times, continually affirming children's achievements with praise and promoting children's independence. For example, they encourage children to use the sticky tape dispenser themselves.

Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel safe. They confidently approach visitors to the setting, select resources and play independently or with other children and staff. They are encouraged to be active learners, for example, helping themselves to the bug boxes and investigation materials provided, to explore cones, moss and other natural artefacts. Children develop further skills for the future as they develop independence, share ideas and work together. For example, staff encourage children to try to fasten their own coats. The rolling snack system is a key strength of the setting because it is really well-organised and thought through to promote children's learning. A pictorial board shows children what choice is available, for example, breadsticks, raisins, banana, water and milk. The children wash their hands, recognise their names and self-register before preparing their own snack under appropriate supervision. They develop their physical skills as they use a knife to cut pieces of banana and they count the breadsticks. Children learn about the relevance of healthy lifestyles as they participate in discussion about how their heart beat increases after exercise and their likes and dislikes of raisins and grapes.

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	2
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