

Playschool Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Playschool Nursery was registered in March 2009 and opened in April 2009. It is the second childcare setting owned and managed by the Playschool Nursery Company. The nursery operates in a refurbished 'listed' building and is situated on a side road in the centre of Harpenden, Hertfordshire, close to all amenities. The nursery operates on two floors with staff rooms on the third floor. The ground floor is fully accessible. There are four base rooms, two on each floor. Additional rooms are provided and used as a library, play space for younger children and dining room. There is a secure outside play area with safety surfaces and grassed area. Children in the 'Wobbler' room have direct and free-flow access to this area and those based in other rooms have timetabled access and visual strategies to help children choose outdoor play.

The setting is open each weekday from 07:15 am to 06:30pm all year, except for national holidays. It is registered on the Early Years Childcare Register. A maximum of 59 children may attend at any one time within the early years age range. There are currently 85 children aged from four months to five years on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Of these, seven children receive funding for nursery education. Children have varying attendance patterns and come from a wide catchment area. The setting currently supports a minority of children with English as an additional language and with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Playschool Nursery employs 16 staff. Of these, nine including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of the senior management team hold the Early Years Professional Status qualification with a further manager enrolled to work towards this. Seven further members of staff are working towards qualifications. Ancillary staff are employed to manage cooking and cleaning tasks. The setting receives support from the Hertfordshire Early Years development team and is a member of the National Day Nursery Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

There is strong leadership and a committed and well-qualified staff team who support the children well and follow an ethos that highly values children as individuals. Consequently, children's individual needs are recognised and met well overall in a mostly enabling environment that has many exceptional features. Strategies to safeguard children and help them feel safe are mostly sound. Strong links with parents are being developed to help them feel confident, involved and valued, and to support the good progress children are making in their learning and development. There is a high level of commitment to continuous improvement and the setting use a range of positive systems to self evaluate which leads to strong improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that a daily record of the names of the children looked after on the premises and their hours of attendance is accurate and consistently maintained (Documentation). 01/10/2009

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

- develop further a rich and varied environment for older children to help them explore and learn independently in a safe yet challenging space
- develop further the risk assessment and constantly reappraise the environment that children are exposed to making necessary adjustments to secure their safety at all times with particular regard to glazing and surfaces used in the outside area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The vast majority of records, policies and procedures are clearly defined and understood thereby meeting children's individual needs well. For example, administering of medication is managed consistently throughout the nursery and visual prompts of individual babies' daily routines are updated each day. The safeguarding procedures are generally robust and prioritise safe recruitment, induction and training in child protection. However, attendance records are not always consistently managed, for example, to reflect all late arrivals. While risk assessments are robust overall, a minority of hazards have not been fully evaluated which potentially limits the extent that children are safeguarded. Excellent systems are in place to ensure the setting is secure, for example, full CCTV monitoring is deployed and finger print recognition pads prevent unauthorised persons from entering the areas used by children. There is generally effective and efficient use of good quality resources overall. For example, the exceptional organisation of the baby room enables older babies to self-select cots for sleeps and to look at photographs of themselves and others that are purposefully positioned around walls near floor level which enables babies to develop a strong sense of identity. Adult and child toilets have been thoughtfully provided in every base room to facilitate effective staff deployment. Space is generally used well although the quality of environment for preschool children is less well developed therefore children are unable to be fully independent, and consistently access rich and exciting play and exploration on demand.

Parents speak very highly of the setting, say their children settle well and the key worker system makes their children feel secure. They are aware of the progress children are making and are kept informed through regular discussions. Many

parents feel they can access their child's assessment records and some do this regularly. Assessment records from previous settings are obtained to underpin children's starting points in their learning and development and observations are well documented to inform the thoughtful planning. Parents work well with staff where additional needs are identified and feel well informed overall. Many engage in monthly social events which are used by management to promote relationships and share ideas for improvement. These complement the formal questionnaires that are actively used to evaluate and develop practice.

There is a strong drive towards continuous improvement underpinned by a committed and well-qualified senior management team. There is an active and ambitious staff development programme that includes appraisals, regular monitoring and support to achieve and extend professional qualifications. Self evaluation engages many staff, parents and children and sets a wide range of useful priorities and targets for development such as the improvement of information on policies and procedure for parents, additional large apparatus in the garden and new safety surfaces.

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

Children enjoy their time at nursery and are making good progress in their learning and development overall. Babies needs are very well met as they explore and investigate the stimulating environment, exploring objects from sensory baskets and are helped by staff who encourage their drive to stand. For example, when babies pull up on to a baby rocker that is held steady while they learn to balance. All children are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. At least two sessions are scheduled outdoors in the fresh air each day and some children have more. Babies enjoy exploring a range of toys while sitting on a blanket while mobile and older children extend control of their bodies as they delight in kicking balls with gusto, playing peep-po with staff and moving in and out of a variety of play tents so are suitably challenged overall. Sometimes the challenges set for the oldest children are limited by the range of open-ended resources available in preschool.

Children are well supported during the weekly music and movement session and can participate or make choices because a reassuring lap is always available for those who are not yet confident to join in with the party atmosphere. Quieter children enjoy watching dance and puppets as others jump and clap with excitement, some showing a sense of rhythm. Children are intrigued and curious as they are encouraged to predict what's inside a magic box and begin to use familiar rhyme, thus extending language for communication. The puppets enable children to recognise feelings of happiness and sadness as a soft toy puppy dog wags his tail or growls. Hoops are used to help children develop a sense of their own space as they participate in action rhymes inside personal hoops.

Well-planned menus and home cooked freshly prepared meals help children to make healthy choices about what they eat and drink. Rolling snack has been introduced for pre-school children to develop their independence and understanding of when they are hungry and thirsty. More established children

enjoy helping those who are less familiar with the free-flow snack procedures, showing natural respect and friendships towards one another. Staff are good role models throughout the nursery, are respectful and offer plentiful praise therefore children behave well and have high levels of self esteem. Although children occasionally lose focus when lining-up to wash hands after mealtimes and the atmosphere is more hectic, they respond well to distraction and instruction. Mealtimes are an opportunity for some siblings to come together and share the social occasion, greeting each other warmly with hugs as they choose to sit together. Sometimes children are selected to take responsibility and hand round beakers or bowls of home made vegetable soup and staff use this as an opportunity to reinforce children's understanding of counting and calculating. Babies and 'wobblers' are beginning to develop independence and self-care skills when encouraged to hold bottles of milk or are offered a spoon to use or hold at mealtimes. Most tuck-in heartily to the home made vegetable soup and brown bread and butter and are confident to ask for extra portions.

Children are well supervised and supported and are therefore generally safe although there are times when young children put trust in adults to keep them safe but have access to a minority of hazards in the garden and on the first floor that have not been fully risk assessed. This reduces the extent that children are fully protected from accidental injury. However, children are purposefully greeted by name each morning by their key worker which helps them to feel secure. Older children are helped to understand dangers and how to stay safe when staff guide them to hold onto banisters when using the stairs or use road safety signs to teach children about road safety.

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	3
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	3
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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